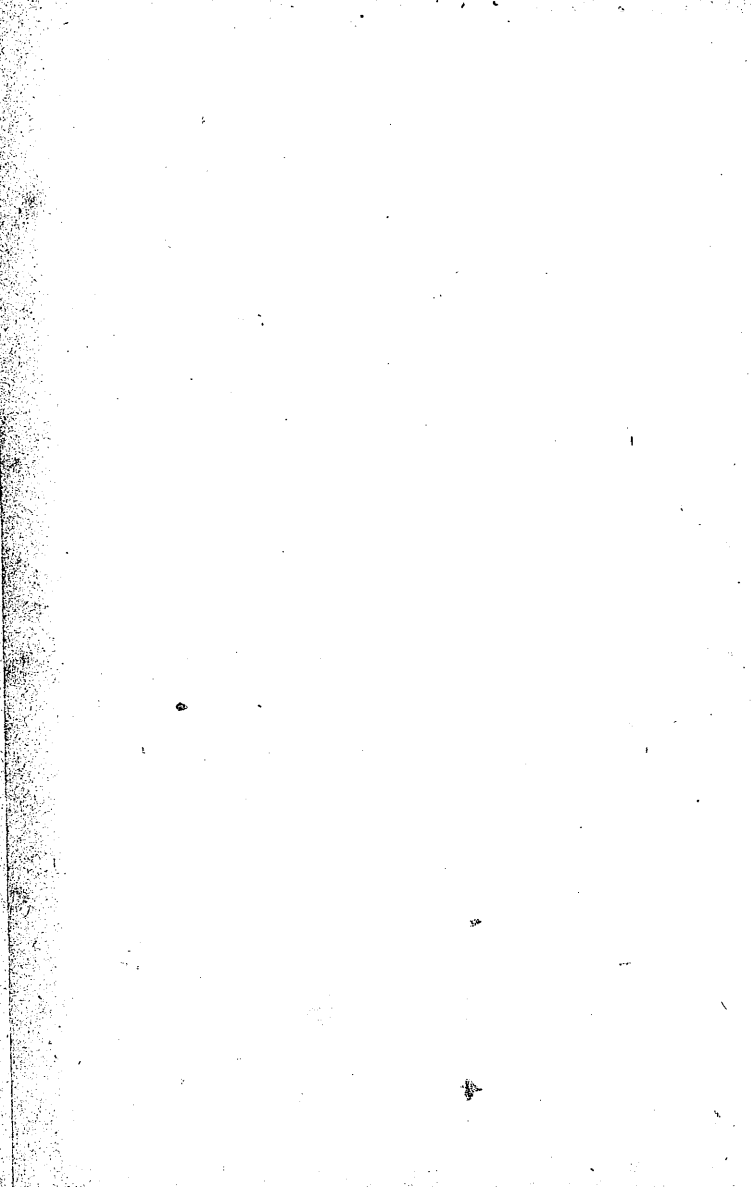




PRIZE ESSAY NO. 2 OF THE S. B. S. S. UNION.

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COMMON OBJECTIONS  
TO THE  
BAPTIST DENOMINATION  
CONSIDERED AND REPLIED TO.

BY

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The plates of this work were contributed by MRS. MARY PHILLIPS,  
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## CHAPTER I.

ARE BAPTIST CHURCHES OF RECENT ORIGIN, OR OLD AS  
THE APOSTLES.

“Search the Scriptures.”—JOHN v: 39.



CHILL November rain had kept all in the little town of Hampton within doors since early dawn. Though so cold and cheerless without, the family apartment of Mr. Blackwell presented a most inviting aspect. A bright wood-fire diffused a comfortable glow throughout the room. The various members of the family seated around it seemed no way inclined to forsake its genial warmth; but, yielding to the influence of diet, and

confinement, and very comfortable position, a drowsiness had crept over all but one, a youth, apparently of seventeen, and the eldest son, who would sit for a few moments absorbed in thought, then, abruptly rising, would take a few turns across the room, his head bowed, and his brows knit, as if in pain. His father was the only one not too much overcome by sleepiness to notice him; and, after quietly watching him for some time, he said:

“My son, you seem to be in trouble about something. May I not ask what it is? Have you had any difficulty with your associates? Or are you thinking of future fame and fortune, and puzzling your young brain to ascertain the sure road to wealth and honor?”

The youth replied only by gazing in his father's face with an anxious, troubled look.

“Well, my dear boy, what is it? I really feel concerned to know what has cast such a gloom over your usually cheerful face; and if my advice can be of any assistance

to you, I hope, my son, you know it will be readily given."

"I don't like to tell you anything, father, that will disturb your peace of mind; for I would not have you feel as I do now for anything."

"William, you alarm me; what has happened? I entreat, I *command* you, to tell me."

"As I was returning from the shop yesterday afternoon, I stopped in at Mr. Warren's store to get a few articles grandmother commissioned me to buy, and as I was waiting for the parcel to be done up, I could not help hearing part of a conversation going on in the counting-room. Some gentlemen were talking a great deal about the Baptists; much of it I do not remember, except that it was abusive; but I heard, very distinctly, a remark made by Judge Hemphill, which has troubled me very much. It was, that the Baptists are of very recent origin; that they were not known in the early ages of the world, but rose in Europe



about the time of the Reformation, and consequently could not be Gospel Churches. Now, Judge Hemphill is a learned man, reads a great deal, and, I presume, knows about these things, and I felt very much distressed at the thought that the Baptist Churches had no Divine origin; for if *that* be the case, I know they can not be the true Churches of Christ."

"And you were distressed," said Mr. Blackwell, pleasantly, "because you thought, *perhaps*, Baptist Churches had no origin in the Gospel. Distressing, indeed, if it were true, but why did you imagine it to be so?"

"Because I heard it so confidently asserted by a man of extensive reading, and one whom, I have often heard you say, is apt to probe a subject to the bottom, if he undertakes to investigate it at all."

"All very true; but does that argue that he has closely investigated the question, What is a true Church?"

"I presume so; for he has been a prom-

inent Presbyterian for a great many years, and I suppose he would feel some interest in ascertaining the correct answer to such a question."

"Never take anything for granted, my son, nor give your assent to an opinion, or be troubled about it, merely because it is confidently expressed by another, no matter how learned he may be, but endeavor to find out for yourself if it be true; and only believe that which you can prove to be true."

"I did not mean to say that I believe the judge's assertion to be altogether true; but the bare thought *that it might be* so distressed me exceedingly."

"And how did you expect to ascertain whether it were true or not, by brooding over it in silence, not even telling your trouble to your father, who is always willing to aid you in any way? I do not take this kindly of you, William."

"O, father, I did not intend to hurt your feelings at all; but I was not willing to see you distressed at your age, and *I know you*

*did* not believe Baptist Churches to be of recent origin, for you have always taught me to the contrary."

"Very well. My opinion against the judge's. Suppose we examine and see which is right. If I am wrong I wish to know it. I have no idea of continuing in error, because I always have been. If that were my determination, and I were willfully to blind my eyes to the truth, I should not consider myself fit to belong to a Gospel Church. First, let us consult the New Testament, for that contains the only infallible testimony upon the subject. Let us look at the description of a Church here given, and see what kind of a body it was."

Here the grandmother, Mrs. Patterson, roused up from her nap in the arm-chair, and Mary, the eldest daughter, closed the book over which she had been listlessly dozing, and both, by their brightened eyes, showed that they were fully awake to the interest of the subject, and expected to give it their close attention.

“I do not know,” said Mr. Blackwell, “that I am acquainted with all the places in the Testament which speak of a Church, or that I can even find them *all*, but we will examine enough to ascertain what a Church is. Now, let me ask you one question, my son. You seem very much distressed because *some* people *pretend* to doubt the Divine origin of Baptist Churches; tell me, how do you think we are to know whether any one of the various organizations claiming to be Churches is of Divine origin?”

“I presume, by examining the description of a Church in the Testament, and seeing if it corresponds with any of the Churches of the present day.”

“Very well. Now here, in the first chapter of Acts, we have an account of a Church assembled at Jerusalem, a few days after Christ ascended into heaven, consisting of the apostles, (verse 2;) to whom the Savior showed himself after his resurrection, and remained with them forty days, ‘speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of

God,' and of the disciples and brethren of the Lord, (verses 13, 14.) They worshiped in an upper room, and on one of the days when the disciples, who numbered about a hundred and twenty, were assembled for worship, Peter suggested to the *whole* Church the propriety of ordaining one of their number, to supply the place of Judas, who had betrayed his Master, (15-26.) Now, what do you say to this description of a Church?"

"Well, it might be a Methodist or Presbyterian Church, as well as a Baptist, for aught I see; for they were merely assembled together to worship, and to attend to a little business; and they all do *that*."

"Yes, my son; but of what kind of people was this Church composed? Of men and women alone, or were there infant children among them?"

"O, no, sir. I presume not; for in the fourteenth verse it says, that 'they all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication;' and of course there were no in-

phants engaged in *that*; but neither do the Methodists or Presbyterians consider their infants as members of the Church."

"Ah! they do not? What is the initiatory rite into a Church, my son? What is the act by which one is made a member?"

"It is 'baptism,' I believe."

"Do not all denominations acknowledge this?"

"Yes, sir, I think they do."

"Well, they baptize, as they call it, *all* their children, and as baptism is the initiatory rite into the Church, of course they must be members, though, it is true, they do not treat them as such. Besides, these Scripture Churches baptized believers alone, (Acts ii: 41;) so a society that baptizes children, who can not believe, is very far from corresponding with the description of a Gospel Church. Again, you are mistaken in saying all sects transact their business as this Church at Jerusalem did. There is no Pedobaptist Church on earth that allows all

its members, infant and adult, an equal right in the transaction of business."

"Well," said William, smiling, "it must have been a Baptist Church; for ours are the only ones that consist entirely of baptized believers, and that allow all their members an equal right in voting."

"Yes, our Church surely corresponds thus far to this one at Jerusalem, organized immediately after the resurrection of the Savior; but do not form your conclusion too hastily. Let us examine further. Here in Matthew we have"——

"Father," said Mary, speaking hastily, "why do you confine yourself to the New Testament; why not go back to the Old, and see what kind of a body a Church is described to be there?"

"If you will tell me in what part of the Old Testament to look for a description of the Church of Christ, my daughter, I will readily do so. *I* do not know where to find it, I assure you."

"O, I don't know, pa, but I thought it was certainly there, for I have heard ministers, when defending infant baptism, say, that children had always formed a part of the Church; that they were introduced into the Jewish Church by circumcision, and into the Christian by baptism."

"Be done, Mary," said grandmother; "children should not be asking questions on subjects which they do not understand."

"I beg leave to differ with you on this occasion, mother," replied Mr. Blackwell; "I am always ready and willing to give my children any information I can, especially on such an important subject. I am glad, in fact, that she asked the question, for I had never before thought of the tendency of such instruction as she has occasionally received at the various churches she attends. Mary, will you tell me whether the various sects claim to be Christian or Jewish Churches?"

"Christian, pa? Certainly."

"Why called Christian?"



“Because instituted by Christ or his apostles, or they claim to be, at any rate.”

“Did Christ institute the rites and ceremonies of the Jewish religion, my child? Or was it Moses?”

“It was Moses, sir. What makes you ask such a queer question, pa? Christ did not make his appearance on the earth till long after the Old Testament was written.”

“Well, would you look into a volume written hundreds of years before his coming, and which prophesied of his coming, to find a Church which he instituted *after* he *did* come?”

“No, sir. I am ashamed of my ignorance. But, pa, I tell you I *have* heard preachers say that *very* thing. Have not you?”

“O, yes, I have heard it often; but I never believe any doctrine merely because I hear another man advocate it, no matter how learned he may be; and the wisest of them have to resort to desperate measures to prove an unsound doctrine. Now, I think

you will admit, that to find Christ's Church we must consult the New Testament, which contains the life of Christ, and the lives and acts of the apostles."

"Yes, sir."

"Now we are ready to examine some other passage. Turn to— Ah! come in, Sanford; this has been an inclement day, sir."

"Yes, sir. I came too early for supper, but as the prospect is good for the rain to continue all night, and I would have to return to my lodgings in the dark, I concluded not to wait."

"You did right. Take a seat near the fire; you appear damp and cold. My children and I are engaged in an interesting work—trying if we can find out whether Baptist Churches are the same with those described in the New Testament; or, in other words, to see if the Churches founded by Christ and his apostles were really Baptist Churches."

"Indeed! Well I hope you will not let

my presence interrupt you. I feel some interest in it myself ; for I have often heard it said that the Baptists are a modern sect."

Mr. Blackwell was a carriage-maker, doing an extensive business in the town of Hampton. He had taken his son William into the shop to learn the trade. Of his several journeymen only one, Sanford Martin, quite a young man, boarded in his family. He often remained an hour after tea to converse with his employer, and with Grandmother Patterson, whom he loved almost as devotedly as did her grandchildren, often picking up her stitches, holding her hank of yarn, or threading her needle, which little acts the old lady declared he did "as handily as a girl."

Mr. Blackwell had to explain to young Martin how far they had gone in their search ; and while he is doing this, let me take the opportunity, my dear young friends, to exhort all of you to follow the advice of this good father to his son. Never, in matters of religion, allow others to think

for you ; never receive their opinions, unless they can *prove* them *by the word of God*. Read the Bible for yourself, and pray God to enlighten your minds, that you may understand his whole will. God has given you the Bible to read, and capacities to understand it, and will hold you accountable for your belief. The fact can not be too deeply impressed upon your minds, that *you* will each have to give an account for *yourself* ; the example or teaching of friends will be no excuse for *your* errors ; your *own* judgment, not *theirs*, was given to you for a guide. Will you ponder this fact deeply, my young friends, and never insult God by reading his word carelessly ? When you receive a letter from a kind friend, how you love to read it over and over, till you remember every word, and understand what your friend means ; and how you love to comply with all his requests. Now, God is better to you than any friend on earth ever has been or ever will be. He has written you a letter, (the Bible,) in which he has told

you all he wants you to do. He has told you exactly how to live, so as to enjoy the greatest happiness in this world and in the world to come; and, better than all, he promises to help you to do right—something which your best earthly friends can not do for you.

“Well,” said Mr. Blackwell, as he concluded his explanations, “it is near supper-time, so we will defer further examination till after supper.”

The short interval remaining Mr. Martin spent in conversing with Mrs. Patterson, and, by turns, caressing Laura and Sam, who sat one on each knee.



## CHAPTER II.

WHAT MATTHEW SAYS ABOUT THE CHURCH.

“To the law and to the testimony.”—ISAIAH, ix: 20.

**I**MMEDIATELY after supper Mr. Blackwell resumed the conversation by turning to the eighteenth chapter of Matthew, and reading three verses, beginning at the fifteenth, “Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church; but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican.”

"These are the directions Christ gave to his disciples how to act with regard to an offending member—that is, what they should do when one of their members violated his Christian obligation to another. All of you understand this, my children?"

"O, yes; and I know that is the way Baptist Churches do now," said Barton, a boy about twelve.

"Are you sure of it, my boy; how do you know?"

"Because, grandma, some time ago, when Mr. Pettigrew thought Mr. Daniels had treated him badly in a trade, he went to him privately and told him about it; but he wouldn't listen; so Mr. Pettigrew got pa and Mr. Ross to go with him again; and because he would not listen to them, nor give them any satisfaction, they brought it into the Church at the next conference meeting; and you know, grandma, the Church excluded him because he was proved guilty, and would not acknowledge his fault. I have not forgotten it, and that day the pas-

tor read the very same verses pa has just now read. Did n't he, pa?"

"Yes. I am glad you observe so closely. This is a rule which Christ gave to his disciples with regard to personal offenses—that is, when one member had offended another personally, but had injured no one else, nor brought any reproach upon the Church publicly; and we see Baptist Churches to this day observing the same rule."

"But, father," said William, "sometimes a member of the Church acts very badly, such as drinking, swearing, stealing, etc., which are great sins, especially for a professor of religion, but affect no one member particularly. In such a case, I know our Churches try him publicly, and if he is found guilty, and does not acknowledge his fault, and ask to be forgiven, they exclude him. But where did they get *this* rule? Did they find it in the Testament? or did they make it?"

"*Make* it, my son? No. I assure you the Baptist Churches have never presumed



to make a law to govern the conscience. They received all their laws from Christ, and act only by his authority. I will show you a rule for this case, and I am surprised that you have not noticed it before. In 1 Cor. v, Paul, in writing to the Church at Corinth in reference to just such a case, says, in verse 4: 'In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of the Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of our Lord Jesus.' Again, verse 11: 'But now I have written unto you, not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such a one, no, not to eat.' And again, at verse 13: 'Therefore, put away from among yourselves that wicked person.' Again, Romans xvi: 17: 'Now, I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to

the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them.' Now, these examples and directions are sufficient to prove that we do not act without Divine authority; are they not?"

"O, yes, sir; and I wonder I did not notice it before. I have read those passages over many times, but never thought of applying them to the practice of our Churches."

William's case is not a solitary one. In Hampton the Church did not think themselves able to have preaching more than twice a month, sometimes only once. The Sabbath-school had been kept up very irregularly; Union books had been used; and though Mr. Blackwell's children had attended regularly, the course of instruction pursued had given them but imperfect notions of the truth as it is in Jesus. Besides, on two Sabbaths in each month they attended service in Pedobaptist houses, where they heard and saw many things contrary to the teaching of Christ. Mr. Black-

well, as he acknowledged, when Mary asked her impromptu question, not thinking of the tendency of such instructions upon the minds of his children, had not been careful to counteract their influence by teaching them himself the whole truth as it is in the Gospel; so William, though seventeen years of age, and a member of the Baptist Church in Hampton, was ignorant of many of the doctrines of Scripture.

This is the case with many of you, my young friends. Some of you live in the country, where, perhaps, you hear Baptist preaching only once a month; perhaps you can attend a Sabbath-school only occasionally; perhaps not at all; let me warn you against studying the word of God carelessly, or receiving the opinions of others, unless they can give you good Bible reasons for them. Some of you may be members of a Church, and, perhaps, you have preferred the Baptist merely because your parents or friends are members. Now, this is not right. Before you go further, ex-

amine our doctrines carefully, and see whether they will stand the test of Scripture. We do not wish you to join our denomination merely because you love some one who is with us, but because you love the truth, *the whole "truth as it is in Jesus,"* and I believe it is embodied in the teachings of the Baptists.

"Well," said Mr. Martin, "you have proved that the Baptists proceed in disciplining their members according to the law laid down in the Testament, and the practice of the first Churches; but are they the only ones who do this? Do not the Pedobaptists the same?"

"You can answer that question yourself, Sanford. You have been acquainted with them a long time, and know something about how they proceed in such cases."

"O yes, sir. I know among the Methodists the class-leader reports the offender to the preacher in charge, and he drops him from the list if his six months' probation is not out; or, if it is, calls a committee to

try him. And the Presbyterians try him before a *session*, consisting of the elders and preacher, without consulting the other members of the Church; and the Episcopalians and Catholics are worse still, for with them the bishop and priest, I believe, take the laws into their own hands, and exclude a member without so much as saying, 'By your leave,' to the lay members. But the Congregationalists, Mr. Blackwell, are democratic people, as well as you, Baptists; may they not be the Churches founded by the apostles?"

"Why, my dear sir, don't you remember that the Churches described in the Testament consist *only* of believers, men and women, who had been baptized upon a profession of their belief in Christ? Now, though the Congregationalists are democratic in their government, yet they baptize their infants into the Church; and in that respect, and in some others, they differ from the pattern given in this book."

"Very true. I don't know why I didn't

think of that. But, Mr. Blackwell, nearly all the various denominations claim to have a Divine origin. Ask the members of each one, and they will tell you theirs is the true apostolic Church—at least many of them will. Now, how in the world is a man to know which is right? It is ungentlemanly to dispute a man's word on such a subject, and surely *all* can not be right. I have always been taught that there can be but *one* right way of doing a thing, but *one* right side to a question. How is a man in my case to decide? I have no particular preference for any, for I believe I have relatives belonging to all denominations."

"Why, do just as we are doing now, Sanford," said Mrs. Patterson; "*try them by the word of God*, and if they can not stand that trial you needn't believe. Better believe the Gospel of Christ, my friend, than all the relatives in the world. God does not require you to go to your relatives or friends to find out his truth, but go to his word. Ah! I know something about leaving dear-

est friends for Jesus' sake. It is a heavy cross indeed, but nothing to what Christ has borne for us."

"Now, my children," said Mr. Blackwell, "are you all satisfied that the Baptist Churches still observe this rule laid down in the Testament?"

"Yes, sir," exclaimed several voices.

"We are obliged to know it, pa," said Burton, "when we see it and hear it with our own eyes and ears, in this Church at Hampton even."

"I guess Mr. Daniels believes it," said Mary, quickly; "and"——

"Be done, Mary; you should not speak so lightly upon such a subject," said old Mrs. Patterson.

These words, and a reproving, yet tender, look from her father, settled Mary quietly back into her seat, from which she was about rising for quite a lengthy talk in the same strain.

The father proceeded: "Suppose we look for some other place in which a Church is

mentioned, and see if the Baptists will agree there too."

"George," said Mrs. Patterson, "Laura is about to fall asleep in Sanford's arms, and Sam is nodding here upon his stool, suppose you have prayers, and let the little ones go to sleep."

"Very well. I feel a little drowsy myself from the effects of the weather, and would like to retire also. We will resume this subject again to-morrow, and try to decide it by the word of God. Stay, Sanford, till after prayers; we will not keep you long."

Mr. Martin, after rousing Laura up and placing her in a chair, had taken his hat to leave, but accepting Mr. Blackwell's invitation, he put it down and resumed his chair. A reverential feeling, to which he had hitherto been a stranger, crept over him as he listened to the words of inspiration, read in an earnest tone by one whom he knew to be a consistent Christian in all his dealings. And as he looked around on the circle, gaz-



ing so confidently in the father's face, tears sprang to his eyes; for memory carried him back to his early childhood, when his father (long since dead) used to gather his family about him, read the Bible, and pray with and for them. That father's prayers ascended as holy incense to the throne of God; for, of his numerous children, all but this one had been gathered into the fold; and now he, after many wanderings and some hardships, had found a haven in a Christian family, all of whom loved him for his virtues and his affectionate disposition. Prayers being over, as he walked out on the porch he found that the rain had ceased, and the moon, faintly struggling through the clouds, gave a soft, misty light, which rendered the walking much better than he anticipated.



## CHAPTER III.

WHAT SANFORD MARTIN THOUGHT THAT NIGHT.

"Let us search and try our ways."—LAM. iii: 40.



R. MARTIN walked slowly to his lodgings, pondering deeply what he had heard. Arriving there he lit his candle mechanically, and, placing it on the mantle, sat down, without replenishing his nearly extinguished fire. A new train of thought was started in his mind. Here was a family whom he knew, from long acquaintance, to be conscientiously pious; yet they were earnestly engaged in searching the Bible, to find out if they really belonged to a Church which was founded by Christ and his apostles—a matter which they seemed to think of the utmost importance, while he had always thought it made no difference

to which denomination one belonged so he was satisfied. He determined to sit with them every evening, and hear what was said, and see if there was any one Church which, in all its doctrines and practices, agreed with the descriptions in the New Testament. As he took from his trunk his carefully-kept Bible, the words of his mother, as she presented it to him years ago, occurred to his memory.

“My son,” said she, “you are now going out into the world alone to seek a livelihood; take this book as the best pledge of my undying love for you. Read a portion of it daily; study it carefully; make its precepts the rule of your life; practice what it teaches, let others do as they will; and may God, in mercy, vouchsafe the pardon of your sins, and grace to sustain you through all the trials of your life.”

He never saw that mother again, for in one short year he received news of her sudden but happy death, and his heart smote him as he thought how inattentive he had



been to her request. He read over again the passages to which Mr. Blackwell referred, and was struck with their close similarity to what little he knew of the practice of Baptist Churches everywhere, for, as Barton had remarked, their proceedings are so public that people can hardly help knowing.

The next day the work in the shop went on more quietly than usual, for William, his father, and Mr. Martin were too busily occupied with their own thoughts to talk much, and the other workmen seemed to have caught the infection from them; so the work went on quietly but busily.

Grandmother Patterson, busied with the oversight of the domestic affairs of her son-in-law's household, and the care of his children, gave herself but little thought about the origin of the Baptists, for she was fully satisfied they originated with Christ himself: for "could n't she read, and was n't it plain enough for all to understand?" But she felt a great interest in young Martin,

and the curiosity he manifested the night before; and the sober expression of his countenance during family worship awakened a hope in her heart that he was becoming serious upon the great subject of his soul's salvation.

"Poor boy!" she soliloquized; "all he lacks is religion to make him one of the noblest of men, and I hope the good seed has been planted in his heart to-night that will spring up and bring forth much fruit to the glory of God."

But little time was lost at noon by Mr. Blackwell or any of his workmen, except in the summer months; so the family dispersed soon after dinner, some to their work, others to school. As they came in at dark, little Laura met her father on the porch, and, taking him by the hand, led him to the fire, where she had placed his wrapper on a chair, and his slippers on the rug.

"Give me your coat, pa, and Sam will take your boots," and away she went to

hang the coat in the wardrobe, though she had to climb on a chair to do it. Running back to the fire, she was soon nestled in her father's lap, telling him, as fast as her little prattling tongue could talk, what she had been doing during the day; she had helped Jane pick the chicken for dinner, helped her feed the pigs, hemmed her grandmother's apron, recited her lessons, and, above all, was learning to knit; grandma had put the stitches on the needles, and showed her how to knit several rounds; and down she sprang to get her new work and show it to her pa.

"Ah, yes, my little pet, you are coming on bravely; you will soon be able to knit pa's stockings," and as he drew closely to his bosom this youngest lamb of his flock, the image of her departed mother, he prayed God to preserve him from making an idol of his pet.

Sanford Martin, who came in with his employer, drew Sam on his knee and questioned him about his progress at school, and

finding that the multiplication-table was a great trouble, undertook to teach it to him. William, after attending to some little duties for his father, sat down with his Testament in hand, though he knew not where to open it. Mary soon announced supper ready, and William, stepping forward, placed his grandmother at table, with all the grace of a courtier. Supper being over, he waited a while for his father to take a smoke, and Mary to assist in clearing away the table, before he opened the subject now of so much interest to him. Then his father checked him by saying, "Stop a moment, my son, there are some other lessons to be learned here to-night; we must not interfere with the children's studies."

"O, pa," exclaimed Mary, quickly, "we studied our lessons some this afternoon, and we will have two hours in the morning before school-time; we can get them then, can't we, boys?"

"Yes," exclaimed both of them. "Pa, please do n't wait on us."

“Very well; now don’t let me hear of an imperfect recitation from any of you to-morrow. What were you going to remark, William?”

“There is one thing our Baptist Churches do different from all the others. Each Church elects its own officers, tries its own members, and when one of their number expresses a desire to preach, they license him, and if they think him worthy, they ordain him, without asking leave of any one else. Each Baptist Church acts in these matters as independently as if it were the only Church in the world.”

“Well, have you any objection to this independence, William?” said Mrs. Patterson, looking up from her knitting in the corner. “I confess I like it; I could not submit to any other rule in Church matters. Christ said, ‘All ye are brethren,’ and he never intended that one should usurp rule or authority over another.”

“I have no objection to it, grandma; I like it too; but I just wanted to know if



that suited the Bible description of the first Churches."

"Your question, my son, carries part of the answer with it; you say, 'the first Churches;' now, if each of these Churches had not been a separate, independent body, as ours are to this day, where would be the propriety of saying 'Churches?' Would it not have been better to say 'the Church in Asia?' for there is where the Gospel was first preached. But let us turn to the book again and see how the first Churches did in this matter also. Here in Revelation, John addresses the 'seven Churches which are in Asia' separately, which there would have been no propriety in doing, unless each of them was an independent body. Again, Paul addresses his epistles to the Church at Rome, the Church at Corinth, the Church at Colosse, of the Galatians, the Thessalonians, each one separately. He speaks of the Churches in Judea, (1 Thess. ii: 14,) *not the Church in Judea*, which would have been the proper expression, if they had not all

been independent of each other. And in his travels, he went 'through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the Churches,' (Acts xv: 41;) not *the Church*, as we say of the Methodist Church South, or the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, or the Episcopal Church of England. Again, 'And so were the *Churches* established in the faith, and increased in number daily,' (Acts xvi: 5;) just as we would say all the Baptist Churches in a certain section of country were revived, and great numbers were added unto them. This is enough, I presume, upon this subject; now let us say something about ordaining. Now, listen to the reading of the first six verses of the sixth chapter of Acts, and see how the Church at Jerusalem chose and ordained their deacons." (Here William read the verses.) "Did you ever see anything of that kind, Barton?"

"La, yes, sir! Why, when I was a little fellow like Laura, I remember they all voted at the church one Saturday for you and Mr. Ross, and the next time there was a meet-

ing they laid their hands on you and prayed, just like it reads there."

"When you were a *little fellow*, indeed!" said Mary; "what are you *now*, Barton?"

"Come, Mary, be done your teasing," said grandma; "of course he is not so little now as he was then."

"Well, well," replied Mr. Martin, "I always knew you Baptists were the most independent set of people in the world, each Church doing just as they please, and making their own laws; but really I did not know you had so much Scripture for it."

"I beg leave to dissent from a part of your remark, Sanford. *We do not make our own laws*; we received them from Christ, our great Lawgiver, and we try, by the help of God, to execute them as Christ directs. You know I have given you a Scripture precept or example for all our practices."

"Yes, sir, yes; so you have; but there is one example in the Testament which

seems to be contrary to this independence and you haven't thought of that."

"What is it?"

"I don't know that I can tell you exactly where it is, or what it is, for I am not very familiar with the Bible," said he, blushing; "but I know I have heard it quoted by Pedobaptists to prove their practices; it is something about the Jerusalem Church sending orders to the other Churches to leave off some practice they had."

"Ah! I see your difficulty and will try to solve it." Here Mr. Blackwell turned to the fifteenth chapter of Acts, and read it. "Now, in the first verse we read that certain men who came from Jerusalem, began to teach the Church at Antioch a false doctrine—that is, that they must be circumcised. Paul and Barnabas disputed with them about it, and finally it gave the Church so much trouble, that to settle the matter, they agreed to send Paul and Barnabas, with some others, to Jerusalem, where these false teachers came from, to

inquire of the apostles and elders about this doctrine. Now, notice the answer that was returned. In verse 22 it reads thus: 'It pleased the apostles and elders, *with the whole Church*, to send chosen men of their own company, to Antioch, with Paul and Barnabas.' These were Judas and Silas, by whom they also sent a letter, saying, (verse 28,) 'For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things.' Then follows, in the next verse, a list of these things. So you perceive, instead of the Church at Jerusalem commanding others, it was the Church at Antioch who sent to them for advice; very naturally too, for this was the first one founded, and it was presumable they were wiser, and capable of giving advice; besides, the apostles and elders to whom they sent, were inspired men, and could, in the name of Christ, legislate for them. But they were careful to associate the *whole Church* in council with themselves, and to give the Holy Ghost as author-

ity for what they did. In these days we have no inspired men to whom we can send for advice; but sometimes when we have a difficulty which we can not satisfactorily settle among ourselves, or when a question relating to doctrine or fellowship occurs, which we do not feel competent to answer, we send it up to our Association, and ask their opinion about it. By this means we get the united wisdom of all the Churches to assist us in our difficulties. They will *advise*, but they never presume to *dictate* to us, or usurp any authority over our actions; for none of them are inspired, and can go no further than to tell us what seems best to them under the circumstances. Are you satisfied with this explanation? or do you still hold to your objection?"

"O, no, sir. I gave that up as soon as you read the chapter, convinced that it was not worth a moment's consideration. It is now near nine o'clock," said he, taking out his watch, "and I will be very glad if you can postpone any further conversation on

the subject till to-morrow evening; for I have some letters to write to-night, and must spend a little time in reading also, for I am ashamed of my ignorance of the Bible, and I ought to be in my room now."

"Certainly, we will postpone to your convenience; glad to see you interested on the subject. Read over all the places we have examined, and see if you can find any other description of a Church, or its acts, by which we have not yet tried ourselves; for we wish to make a faithful comparison of the Baptist Churches with the New Testament Churches, to ascertain if we have a Gospel origin."

"I will, sir. Good-night."

After his departure Mr. Blackwell talked with his children a while, as was his custom, inquiring of each what progress they had made in their studies during the day, how they had conducted themselves at school and at home. He listened patiently to a recital of all their little difficulties, reproved or praised them, according as he thought

their conduct had been blamable or praiseworthy, and gave them much good advice to regulate their future conduct. He made himself a companion for his children, and was rewarded by having their entire confidence; so he was able to regulate all their behavior. Children and youth would avoid many indiscretions, to say nothing of actual difficulties, by talking freely to their parents of everything that occurs to them, and by obeying their directions in all things. Let all who read this little book be careful to have no secrets from their parents, and to consult them before doing anything which you are not perfectly satisfied they will approve. They are older and wiser than yourself, and you may be sure they have your best interest at heart, and will save you from committing many grievous faults, for which you might afterward be very sorry.



## CHAPTER IV.

"I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist."—  
ACTS xxi: 15.

**T**HE next day some of the workmen in the shop undertook to jeer young Martin upon the subject of his secret cogitations; told him he must look sharp to his side of the question; for the "boss" was a keen man, and would be apt to make out his party right, whether or no. How they had ever heard anything about their conversations at night, as none of the party had ever mentioned it, would be wonderful to any one who did not know how rapidly news circulates from those newsmarkets—schools. Mary and Barton, very much inflated with the importance of being permitted to take part in the conversations, had each talked

about it in their respective schools, whence it was variously reported according to the ingenuity or understanding of each reporter.

"I have no particular side of the question, Reynolds," said Martin, in reply to this, "but I always feel interested in finding the truth of anything, and I must confess I never knew before that there was a Baptist Church in the world, till about the time of the Reformation."

"And how do you know any better *now*, eh?"

"Why, the New Testament gives a description of a Church or Churches, just as they were in the time of the apostles, and it corresponds exactly with the Baptist Churches now."

"What! do you believe the Baptist Church is as old as the time of the apostles?"

"Certainly. I am obliged to believe it upon the evidence of Scripture itself."

"I should like to hear how you make it out."

“Come and take supper with us to-night, Mr. Reynolds,” said William, “and we will take pleasure in showing you what we know about it.”

“Thank you, I will; for I know comparatively nothing about the Baptists, except that they are an honest, working, independent set of people.”

William scarcely waited for supper to be over before he introduced the all-absorbing topic by saying:

“I have been thinking a great deal to-day, father, of our conversations the past two evenings, and have formed a kind of comparison in my head, which, if I can make it known in an intelligible manner, may enable us the better to see what we are doing.”

“Let us have it, my son; no doubt we can understand you.”

“It is this:

|                                                                                                            |                                                                                         |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| “1. The New Testament Churches were separate, independent bodies, each one independent of all the others.” | “1. Baptist Churches are also separate bodies, each one independent of all the others.” |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

others. PROOF—In Revelation, John addresses the ‘seven Churches which are in Asia’ separately. Paul addressed his epistles separately to the Church at Corinth, the Church at Rome, the Church at Ephesus, the Church at Colosse, to the Churches in Galatia, etc., which would not have been necessary if they had not all been separate, independent bodies.

“2. The New Testament Churches each one elected and ordained their own officers within themselves. PROOF—Acts vi: 3-6.

“3. The New Testament Churches consisted only of believers; those who were of sufficient age to exercise faith in the Savior, to take part in the worship, and in transacting the business that came before the Church, and they re-

“2. Baptist Churches do the same thing now; each one elects and ordains its own deacons, ordains its own ministers, and sends them forth authorized to preach, administer the ordinances, and found Churches.

“3. Baptist Churches are the same to this day, consisting only of persons who have been baptized upon profession of their faith.

ceived into their numbers only such as professed repentance and faith in Christ. PROOF—Acts i: 14-26; ii: 41-47.

“4. The New Testament Churches transacted their business in an assembly of the *whole Church*, each individual having equal rights. PROOF—Acts xiv: 27; xv: 22, 25, 30.

“5. The New Testament Churches acknowledged only Christ for their head; obeying such laws as they received from him through his inspired apostles. PROOF—Eph. v: 23; 1 Thess. iv: 2, 3; 2 Thess. iii: 6; 1 Cor. v: 4; Col. i: 18; Matt. xviii: 15-17.

“6. The New Testament Churches baptized only by immersion. PROOF—Christ their lawgiver was immersed, and the apostles immersed all who professed faith in Christ. Acts viii: 38; Rom. vi: 3; Col. ii: 12.

“4. Baptist Churches transact their business in the same manner, each member having an equal right to vote.

“5. Baptist Churches acknowledge no authority but that of Christ, no lawgiver but him.

“6. Baptist Churches do the same.

“Now, I have compared them together,

“and I perceive that Baptist Churches of the present day are in all things like the apostolic Churches; so I am forced to conclude that instead of originating about the time of the Reformation, (as Judge Hemphill asserted,) they date back to the days of the apostles, and the first Christian Church ever founded was certainly a Baptist Church.”

“Yes, brother, and if I were in your place I’d tell Judge Hemphill about it the first time I saw him, that I would,” said Mary, rising abruptly and dropping her work, which her grandmother had given her when they first took their seats, with the remark, that she could work and hear too.

“Be *done*, Mary,” said Mrs. Patterson; “look where your work has fallen; there are your scissors with the point sticking in the floor, and your spool has run into the ashes. What a confusion you have produced! Little girls should not be so pert.”

“Gather up your things, my daughter,” said Mr. Blackwell; “now take your seat and keep still the remainder of the even-

ing; I am sorry to see you manifest such a disposition, and I presume your brother has no desire to exult over Judge Hemphill, or feels any anger toward him for the remark made on the origin of the Baptists. Do you, my son?"

"O, no, sir; I am glad I heard it, for it has given me much pleasure to examine the Scriptures on the subject, and to find out the truth about it. I might never have known it if it had not been for the judge. I am perfectly satisfied now, but we haven't heard any one else express an opinion."

"I was satisfied last evening," said young Martin."

"Well, I think you have made out the case pretty clear," observed Mr. Reynolds. "I didn't know before that the Bible said so much about a Church; I always thought each denomination fixed up a plan which suited their notions best. But with all your comparisons, Mr. Blackwell, there is one which you forgot. If I am not mistaken there are bishops mentioned in the Testa-

ment. Didn't they have something to do with Churches? But you Baptists disdain the office of bishop."

"I did not forget this, but was afraid I could not explain the difference between a modern bishop and a bishop of the New Testament, so as to make my children understand it, and was turning it over in my mind when William proposed his plan for our hearing. Yes, the office of a bishop, in the modern sense of the term, we disdain, and will have none of his authority; but you will bear in mind that this word has very materially changed in signification since the Scriptures were written. We do not disdain a Scriptural bishop. Let us examine a few places where a bishop is mentioned, and see how he will compare with one of our preachers. Paul, in writing to the Church at Philippi, addresses the saints with the 'bishops and deacons,' (Phil. i: 1.) Now, these bishops could not have been what some folks call bishops *now*, for there were several in the one Church at Philippi;



and a bishop in *these* days presides over several Churches at once, pastors, members, and all. But you know there can be several preachers or elders belonging to one Church, which is frequently the case in a city; so these bishops must have been the same as our modern preachers. And in his epistle to Titus, i: 5, he says he left him in Crete, that he might ordain elders in every city, and, in giving the qualifications of these elders, (verse 7,) he calls them bishops. In this case also, there must have been one or more in every city. Then we read in Acts, xx: 17-28, that Paul sent from Miletus for the elders or preachers of the Church at Ephesus, and in his address to them he charged them to take heed to themselves and all the flock over which the Holy Spirit had made them bishops."

"No, pa, it reads overseers; I read it in my lesson last night," said Barton.

"I am glad you noticed it, my son. It does read 'overseers' in our Bible, but the word in the original Greek, in which the

New Testament was written, is the very same which, in other places, is translated bishop. So that if the word bishop was ever used by the inspired writers it was used here. And this shows that there were several bishops in the single Church at Ephesus. A Scriptural bishop, therefore, was quite a different thing from a modern bishop, but not at all incompatible with the idea of a preacher, such as we have ; so I conclude that a bishop in those days was simply what we mean now by a minister or elder. Don't you see it?"



## CHAPTER V.

HAVE THE BAPTIST CHURCHES CONTINUED ALL THE  
TIME SINCE THE DAYS OF THE APOSTLES?

“ yes, sir; I see that plain enough,”  
replied the young man, “and I  
must admit that you Baptists  
have a Scripture origin and  
Scripture authority for all you  
do; but it has been more than  
eighteen hundred years since Christ ascend-  
ed into heaven and these Churches were  
founded. There have been a great many  
changes in the world since then: whole na-  
tions have disappeared from off the face of  
the earth; a great deal of literature has been  
lost; millions of Christians have been put to  
death; and in all these changes and perse-  
cutions, don’t you suppose these Baptist  
Churches *might* have been entirely de-  
stroyed, and, in later times, some one wiser

in Biblical knowledge than his brethren, and more conscientious in the performance of duty, might have founded one after the New Testament pattern, which others copied? In *that* case, sir, you could not date back to the days of the apostles."

"No, in that case we could not; but I am surprised at your supposition, Reynolds. Answer me a few questions, will you? By whose authority were the first Churches organized?"

"By Christ's authority, of course, and from him they received all their laws."

"Do you suppose that he would suffer an institution which he had ordained and established at so great cost, to be entirely swept from existence?"

"No, sir; I presume not; I did not think of that."

"The fact that these Churches are of Divine origin is sufficient proof to us that they have never, in any age, become extinct; but besides this, we have the evidence of historians that they have existed in every age

of the world. From the days of the apostles down to the present, there has not been a time in which there were not Baptist Churches to preserve the institution in all its purity, and Baptists to maintain the truth, often to seal it with their blood. Yes, it has been more than eighteen centuries since Christ ascended into heaven, but in all that time he has not wanted a witness to perpetuate the institution which he founded. Empires have risen and fallen, most magnificent monuments of human genius have been swept away, because they were earthly, and destined to decay; but no plan of the Divine mind has ever failed, or ever will fail. The persecutions that have, in all ages, raged against the Baptists, have indeed been severe enough to exterminate them, if they had depended upon their own strength, or to have swept their Churches entirely off the face of the earth, if they had been an institution of man. But Jehovah placed his seal upon their organization, and it is perfect and unfailing. From off his throne

of glory he had an eye to the sufferings of his children for the truth's sake, and hid them in caves and dens, in clefts of rocks, and in sides of rugged mountains, where they preserved his institutions in all its purity. When Christ left the earth, he did not cease caring for his followers, but has been with them through all the changes of the world, and shielded, not only them, but the Church which he planted, amid the fierce persecutions to which they were often subjected. We have in the Bible the plain and express declaration of Christ himself, that against his Church the gates of hell, the powers of darkness, never should prevail. The Church could never have been destroyed, or so corrupted as to cease to be what he ordained it, unless his promise failed. But this could never fail till the truth of God and the power of God should fail. Here we may take our stand then as Baptists, and when we have proved that the Churches set up in the time of Christ and the apostles were Baptist Churches, declare in the face

of heaven, earth, and hell, that they have ever since continued to exist, and now exist, just such in all that is essential to their being as they were then. Jesus promised it, and it must be so. If any one says it was not so, he accuses God of violating his promise, and we must hold him to the proof. It is not enough for such a one to say that there is not in human history any account of such a Church in every age, for there have been many things in the world of which history has made no record and preserved no description. But if you wish any human testimony that the Church of God has never been extinct, at any time, here is Orchard's History of Foreign Baptists and of English Baptists, in which you will find the Baptist Churches traced in one unbroken line of succession from the days of the apostles, and supported by reliable historical testimony. You can take them to your room if you choose, and read them at your leisure, and I am confident, when you get through, you will readily acknowledge that the Bap-

tist Churches originated with Christ and the apostles, and have continued without interruption to the present time. And here is the second volume of Theodosia Ernest, in which you will find a careful arrangement from the Scriptures of those peculiarities by which a true Church of Christ is always to be known, and a brief, though complete account of the various names which it has pleased the world to give these followers of Christ in different ages and countries, from the apostles down to our own time."

"Thank you, sir. I will read them carefully, or Sanford and I will read for each other by turns. What say you to that, Sanford?"

"I am perfectly willing. I feel considerable interest in the question, not only for the truth's sake, but because my mother was a Baptist."

"Was she, Sanford?" said Mrs. Patterson; "dear me; now why didn't you tell me that long ago?"

"Would you have thought any more



highly of Sanford, mother, if you had known that circumstance?" said Mr. Blackwell. "I believe you already love him as one of your children."

"So I do, George; but if I had *just known* his mother was a Baptist, he would have felt nearer to me, like; for the Baptists feel like my own kinsfolks, and I love them and their children too."

"I hope, then, you will bestow a portion of your love upon me too, for both of my parents are Baptists," said Mr. Reynolds.

"Ah! indeed; well, I am really glad to hear it; hope my old eyes will, before long, see both of you good, conscientious Baptists."

"I do n't know, Mrs. Patterson; there are so many objections made to you Baptists, I am afraid you are not exactly right."

"There are always a great many objections made to the truth, Mr. Reynolds, but it is the truth still; and happy is the man that abides in it. He will stand firm in the great day of accounts, when the reviler of

truth will be trembling with fear. Try us by the word of God, and if our doctrines don't agree with that, you will do right to reject them; but if they *do*, beware how you object or heed objections to what God has ordained."

"I will try to 'search the Scriptures,' as the preachers tell us," replied he, as they rose to leave.

"Stay, boys, till after prayers, and sing with us," said Mr. Blackwell; "our services are not usually long, and I promise you they shall not be very prosy."

They resumed their seats at his request, for Mr. Blackwell was much respected by all his journeymen, and they were always polite and obliging in their manners toward him. After reading a chapter and commenting slightly upon it, he selected a favorite hymn, which they joined the family in singing. In the prayer which followed he pleaded most earnestly for those with whom he was daily associated, and especially that they might be guided in the way

of all truth. This sobered Mr. Reynolds so completely that he did not pass a single jest on the way home. Arriving there, he laid Orchard's Histories and Theodosia in a safe place, and retired so quietly that his room-mate wondered what had come over him.



## CHAPTER VI.

## BAPTIST IGNORANCE.

"Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works?" "Is not this the carpenter's son?"—  
MATT. xiii : 54, 55.

THE next day, at noon, one of Mr. Reynolds's companions discovered Orchard's Histories lying on a shelf in his room, and in a surprised tone exclaimed: "What is this, Reynolds? History of the *Baptists*! Are you going to read it?"

"Yes; Sanford Martin and I intend reading it to each other at night. I anticipate much pleasure in tracing the Baptists through all ages down to the present time. You seem to be very fond of history; will you not sit and read with us?"

"Pshaw! no, I thank you; I have read it."

“Well! what do you think of it?”

“Why, he has made out the regular succession of the Baptists from the apostles pretty clear, that’s certain; but then they are an ignorant set of people in the mass, and always have been.”

“Take care, Stanton; I am not a Baptist myself, but my mother is, and I can’t hear any one sneer at them.”

“O! I don’t wish to wound your feelings; excuse me. I believe they are a very good sort of people,” and he left the room, whistling a merry air.

Mr. Reynolds paid no more attention to the taunt, but young Martin, who also heard it, could not dismiss it so readily from his mind: “Is not this true,” said he, within himself. “They are generally a plain, unassuming kind of people, and I know of none that have any great pretensions to learning, except, perhaps, a few of their preachers; I will see what Mr. Blackwell will say to it, any way.”

Accordingly, that evening, as he rose

from the supper-table, he said: "I heard another objection made to the Baptists to-day, or, perhaps, it might more properly be called a sneer, that I thought I would ask you about."

"What is it? I am willing to hear all that can be said about them."

"I heard a gentleman say, that they are a very ignorant set of people; and I could not dispute it, for, (begging your pardon, sir,) I don't know of any great amount of learning among them; and I could not help thinking that a sect so generally ignorant are not very apt to discover the truth."

"Truth is truth, my son," said grandmother, "and you can't make it anything else, no matter how ignorant its advocates are. You have seen, from the Bible, that the Baptists are true, and if they know nothing else, they know the *Scriptures*; and while they understand God's law aright, and practice it in their lives, I don't think they can be called ignorant."

“Excuse me, Mrs. Patterson, for repeating the remark in your hearing; I would not hurt your feelings for anything.”

“O, bless your heart, I have heard such things so often I do not care for them; we have always been accused of many bad things, but nothing of that kind affects us, so long as our consciences are clear. Ah! the Jews bristled up when Christ began to teach *them*, and wanted to know how came *this man* to know letters, as he had never been to the school of the prophets, or been instructed by their DOCTORS of law. How, then, could *he* presume to teach *them*? So it often is said of us: ‘The poor, ignorant, Baptists; how do they know the truth, when many of them know nothing but the English language, and never saw the inside of a college?’ But we can make the same reply our Savior did to the Jews: ‘*Our doctrine is not our own, but his that sent us.*’ —John vii: 15, 16. Yes, my son, it was not left to us, poor worms that we are, to discover the truth, but *God* gave it to our

brethren, and has given us grace to preserve it pure to the present time."

"Sanford," said Mr. Blackwell, smiling, "what is most necessary for us to learn, in order to understand the will of God, to know how to live, so as to please him in all things?"

"The Bible."

"Do you think the Baptists are usually very ignorant of the Scriptures?"

"O no, sir; I rather think they are better acquainted with the Bible than other denominations, for they practice its doctrines more generally in their lives, and all of them, I believe, from the least to the greatest, quote Scripture for their belief."

"It is not unfrequently the case that a man is learned in that which concerns his profession, while he is comparatively ignorant in other things. We sometimes meet with a skillful physician who knows but little of theology, a successful farmer unacquainted with the languages, or a master mechanic ignorant of medicine, an experi-



enced teacher who knows nothing of agriculture; yet, if each one is well acquainted with the principles and duties of his profession, you would not call him an ignorant man, would you?"

"No, sir."

"Then, if a man is well versed in the Scriptures, he can not be ignorant of the duties required of him as a Christian, of the ordinances which Christ would have him to observe, and of the laws which he has given for the government of his Churches, even though he may have but little of the learning of the schools. But I hold that one who is well read in the Bible will know something else. The first history we have of the world is contained in the Bible; the best code of laws, and that which forms the basis of all our laws, is in the Bible; the only perfect system of morality ever furnished to the world is contained in the same book. It speaks also of the heavenly bodies, (even mentioning some of the constellations by name,) and of the signs of the

weather; so, one of ordinary intelligence, who studies the Bible as a Christian should do, can not be much of an ignoramus; do you think he can?"

"No, sir."

"Well, you have just acknowledged, that the Baptists, generally, are well versed in the Bible, the exponent of the principles of their religion, and which alone is absolutely necessary for them to know in order to find out the true path of duty, the way that leads to life everlasting. I have known some of our members of only ordinary intelligence, or some of our aged sisters who make no pretensions to learning, who know more of the true Gospel doctrine than some learned professors of other denominations."

"Yes," said Mrs. Patterson, laying down her knitting, and raising her spectacles; "for, as little education as I have, I know the teachings of Christ better than to think any of the doctrines he taught are not essential, or that it makes no difference what we believe so we are sincere; a thing

which I heard a learned doctor of divinity, among the Presbyterians once say. Yes, Sanford, it is not the amount of college learning that makes us wise; for God has given to each of us a certain measure of natural intellect, and will enlighten our minds so that we may understand his HOLY WORD aright, and he will lead us in the way of all truth, if we but ask his guidance and blessing. He has made it so plain that the wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein."

"But, grandma, you read the Bible so *much*," said Sanford from his seat in the corner, "that's the reason you know so much about it. Don't you know everything that's in it?"

"Not *everything*, son; but I would not give my knowledge of the Bible for the best education the best schools can afford, without it. No, indeed, for it will make us wise unto salvation, while a mere intellectual education will only make us wise in the things pertaining to this life;" and with a

self-satisfied air she replaced her spectacles and resumed her knitting.

“Yes; mother is a living example of the fact, that an ordinarily intelligent Christian who reads the Bible carefully, prayerfully, with a view to learn the whole will of God, is far from being ignorant. But, Sanford, do you remember who first taught the doctrines held by the Baptists?”

“Christ, sir; he taught the apostles the way of life and salvation, gave them laws for the government of the Churches, and the apostles were inspired to teach others.”

“Who is Christ, my son?” turning to Sam.

“He is the Son of God; he came to earth to teach us how to be good, but wicked men put him to death.”

“Would you take the Son of God, my children, to be a very ignorant man?”

“O father!” exclaimed Barton and Mary in a breath.

“Do spare me, if you please, Mr. Blackwell,” said Mr. Martin; “I am sure I in-

tended to convey no such impression ; what have I said to make you think so ?”

“I am not reproving you, Sanford ; that is not my nature ; I am merely trying to discuss the subject in such a manner as to make the truth plain to you. Now, you have heard it objected to Baptist Churches, that the members are ignorant. But, my dear boy, if the founder of a society, or the author of a doctrine is undoubtedly wise, would you consider that doctrine untrue or that society objectionable, because many of its advocates are unlearned in things which do not pertain to that doctrine, or the doctrines and usages of that society ?”

“No, sir.”

“Well, we have proved from the Scriptures that the Baptist Churches originated with Christ, the Son of God, who is of infinite wisdom ; so the doctrines which he promulgated must be true, even though their advocates may be unlearned in the wisdom of the schools. And, as mother says, it was not left to fallible mortals to discover the

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truth, the Gospel truth; it was taught to them by Christ himself; all they had to do was to obey his teachings, and to keep unmixed from error the doctrines they received directly from him, or through his inspired apostles."

"I did not say that the Baptist Churches were not Scriptural in their doctrines," replied Sanford; "at least, I did not intend it."

"I know you did not; neither did your friend to-day; but he objected to them because the members are not usually remarkable for their learning; in fact, some are very ignorant. What is it, Barton? you seem anxious to speak."

"I was just thinking, pa, suppose, at the day of judgment, one was to say that he would not join a Church which he knew to be true, just because the members were ignorant, would that be any excuse? would God excuse him for doing wrong when he knew better?"

"No, my boy. Even to say he knew no

better would be no excuse for him; every one of ordinary capacity, who can read the Bible, can, by searching, find out the true way, and it is his duty to walk in it, though he should have only ignorant people for company, and the whole learned world should be arrayed against him."

"But," said Barton, "does n't it look like—O, pshaw! I can't say it exactly as I want to—but does n't it look a little like blaming Christ to say that only ignorant folks join the Churches which he founded?"

"Well," replied he, smiling, "it does seem rather like a contempt of Christ to say that only ignorant people believe all the doctrines which he taught."

"I do not think that those who say it intend any contempt of Christ," said William, "or ever think of it in that light. I think they merely say it sometimes because they do not know what else to say."

"Perhaps they do; but as I am trying to answer this objection to Baptists, it is my duty to notice it in all its bearings. Not only

the Founder of our religion was infinitely wise, but the great apostle Paul, who taught our doctrines, was celebrated for his learning as much as for his zeal in the cause of religion. He says himself that he was brought up in the city of Jerusalem, 'at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers.'—Acts xxii: 3. And this Gamaliel was a 'doctor of the law, had in reputation among all the people.'—Acts v: 34. So Paul enjoyed the best advantages of those days, and from his writings we judge that he was not only thoroughly educated, but a man of a naturally strong mind, of excellent reasoning powers, and well-balanced judgment. If the Gospel of Christ needed the recommendation of man, or could be honored by those who profess it, the reputation and learning of Paul would have done it. He was skilled in all the learning of the day, of honorable birth, belonged to the popular sect among the Jews, enjoyed the confidence of the high priest and elders; yet he



thought it not derogatory to himself to cast in his lot among the Baptists, whom he had persecuted previously to his conversion. Again, we rank among our brethren, Timothy, a disciple of Paul, one who, from a child, had known the Scriptures, which are able to make us 'wise unto salvation.' But it is not necessary to mention all the distinguished characters of the New Testament by name, all of whom were of our belief."

"Ah! Mr. Blackwell," said Martin, "how do you know that?"

"Why," said William, "they all belonged to the first Churches that were organized; and you know, Sanford, we have proved that *they* were Baptists."

"O, yes; certainly we did. Prove anything by the Bible and I will give it up. But you remember, Mr. Blackwell, the first disciples of the Savior were ignorant fishermen."

"True, they were fishermen; but does a man's occupation degrade him? Besides, what certainty have we that they were ig-

norant in the truths of religion? Were they not taught by the Savior himself? And do you not suppose he instructed them thoroughly in the doctrines he wished them to practice?"

"O, yes, sir. There is no mistake about their knowing the right way; in fact, they could not err, having Christ for their teacher. But you have said it was their duty to keep his teachings unmixed from error. Did they do it?"

"I presume they did; for we have the very same doctrines now that they held, so they must have been preserved free from error by some one, or we would not have received them pure. But here is another fact which you have not thought about. The learning of the opposers of the Baptists sustains our doctrines and practices. We can appeal to their own most learned men and greatest teachers, and prove by them that the first Churches were like ours, each an independent body;\* that infant baptism

\* Mosheim.

was not commanded by Christ or practiced by the apostles;\* and that immersion was the act of baptism in all the Churches for many hundred years.† These things have been not only admitted but *proved* by many of the most thoroughly educated and widely celebrated of all opponents. We can, in every instance where learning is necessary to settle a question between us and them, decide it in our favor by an appeal to themselves. The fact is, there is not to be found any single scholar of any reputation among them, who will dare to deny that the baptism of the first Churches was like that of the Baptist Churches, an immersion in water; nor any one who will dare to assert that there is either any command or example in the Bible for infant baptism. Some of their second and third-rate men may venture such assertions, but the truly learned among them testify for us.”

“But, father,” said William, “since the days of the evangelists and apostles have

\* Neander.

† Dr. Wall.

there been no Baptists but ordinary or ignorant people?"

"If you will read the history of the Baptists, my son, you will find that in every age there have been persons distinguished for their talents, education, or high position, who have embraced our doctrines and espoused our cause. I much prefer you should read this for yourself, my son; you are old enough to understand history and take an interest in tracing out all that concerns us. Besides, you know that in our own day there are many Baptists celebrated as linguists, historians, and scientific men. And you know, Sanford, if you will only take the trouble to think of it, that the Baptists, in the mass, are far from being ignorant. There is sound, practical sense among them, a capacity to think and judge for themselves, especially in matters pertaining to the conscience, and an independent manner of acting, which is peculiar to enlightened minds. If we had been very ignorant we should not have been so inde-

pendent as we are; for ignorance, instead of throwing off the shackles of servitude, bows tamely to the yoke."

"Yes," remarked grandmother, "you never saw a Baptist ignorant enough to submit to be ruled by a priest, bishop, or any other ecclesiastical officer; they know too much for *that*. You never saw one too ignorant to understand the plain Scriptures, or weak enough to let others interpret for him, when God has given him a judgment of his own. *I say* you never saw one who could not understand how Christ was baptized, by merely reading the description, without bothering any one else to explain it to him. Ah! yes, they may call us ignorant, Sanford; but, thank God, we know the truth, and that is worth more than all the education of the schools."

"Really, Mrs. Patterson," said Sanford, laughing, "I believe your arguments are more convincing than Mr. Blackwell's; there is not so much logic in them, but you come right to the point. That is the fact; you

have the truth on your side, and it makes no difference what others say against you."

"But how is it, William," queried Mr. Blackwell, "that you did not seem to care for this charge against the Baptists? You took on so sadly about what Judge Hemphill said, that I looked to see you very much distressed by anything else of the kind; but you have been as quiet this evening as if you took no interest in the subject under consideration."

"O, yes, sir; I am deeply interested, and have been highly gratified by the conversation to-night. But I was not distressed by the taunt, for since we have proved the Divine origin of the Baptists from the Bible, I don't think I can be distressed by anything that will ever be said against them."

"Not so certain of that, my son. You don't know what hard things can be said of the Baptists. You have been raised among them, and are now one of them, so you will not be so apt to hear it; but mother can tell you many such things, for she was once

a Pedobaptist, and excited their anger terribly when she joined the Baptists. Can't you, mother?"

"O, yes, but not to-night; I am getting tired and sleepy. I am not so young as I used to be, children; twenty years ago I could work all day, and sit up and knit and talk till ten or eleven o'clock at night; but I can't do it now; my frame is getting weak and my eyes dim, and I soon give out at night. Good-by, Sanford," as the young man, hat in hand, bade good-night to the circle. "I am not hurrying you off, my son, but I can not sit up as I used to; you are always welcome to sit with us till bedtime."

"No apology, if you please, Mrs. Patterson; thank you for reminding me. I would not, for the sake of any pleasure, keep you up beyond your usual hour."

## CHAPTER VII.

## BAPTIST BIGOTRY.

“And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children.”—DEUT. vi: 7.

**F**OR several days Mrs. Patterson drooped about the house from the effects of a cold, which she attributed to having gone out several times with her head uncovered during that rainy Sabbath. Of course there were no evening conversations, for all in the house were kept as still as possible, in sympathy for the old lady's sufferings. Mr. Martin, immediately after supper, retired to his room, and there he and Mr. Reynolds read Orchard's History to each other by turns. They were not always alone, for occasionally one of their comrades would come in and listen a while. It was curious

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to hear the various opinions expressed by them; some said it was a book gotten up by an old broken-down Baptist preacher, on purpose to gain a little favor with his denomination, and make them support him in his old days; some that it was a remarkable exhibition of Baptist ingenuity and industry; that such a collection of historical facts could never have been strung together by any one but a hard-headed, persevering Baptist; the most of them wondered that Martin and Reynolds could be interested with such dry stuff, and thought that it was only to gain favor with Mr. Blackwell that they pretended to be interested. They did not conceal these remarks from the readers, but, happily, they cared nothing for them; they soon became really interested, and returned to their readings each night with renewed zest.

Mrs. Patterson dozed in her rocking-chair for a day or two, scarcely rousing herself for anything except to give the servants a few directions, and occasionally to show

Laura about her work, but almost unheeding the little one's talk, as she prattled on from morning till night.

"Ah me," soliloquized the old lady, as she smoked her pipe, after she had somewhat recovered from her attack, "I'm getting to be of no account; I've seen the time when I could have done all my work such a day as last Sunday was and never felt it; but folks are like everything else, they will weary out. Ah! if it were not for dear Laura's children, I should pray the Lord to take me home; but I am willing to suffer on while I can be of any use to them. Yes, yes, this reminds me that William wants me to tell him what I have heard said against the Baptists. The Lord knows I have heard enough; but then I don't know whether I ought to tell the children or not; it might prejudice their minds against other denominations, and I would not do that for anything." Here she sat for several minutes, apparently absorbed in a deep study, drawing about one whiff a minute, till her

pipe was exhausted, when she closed her meditations by saying aloud, "Maybe, after all, I'd better tell them, for if they live and mingle much with the world, they'll be very apt to hear it; and if I tell them now, they will be better prepared to answer all these objections when they hear them, and not be so distressed as William was the other day. Here, Laura, honey, lay grandma's pipe away, and hand me my specs and work-basket; I think I can knit a little this evening."

The little one obeyed the request with great alacrity, for she was so rejoiced to see grandma well enough to smoke and knit again, that she skipped about as light as a feather. When her pa came in from his work she met him on the porch with the glad tidings that "grandma was most well." As he took his gown and slippers from her hand, he asked:

"And what have *you* been doing to-day, my little pet?"

She replied by pulling out of her little

basket several tiny squares of patchwork, which she said she intended to sew together into a quilt for grandma. Then she entertained her pa by telling him the plan she and Mary had formed to put together all the pieces they had saved, and get Jane to help them to put it in the frames, and quilt it for grandma to cover with when she lay on the lounge; for the little girls could not attempt one large enough for a bed.

Laura was not the only one who rejoiced at Mrs. Patterson's recovery, for she was beloved by the whole household, and the slightest complaint from her cast a gloom over all their feelings, especially over Mr. Blackwell and William, who realized how necessary to their comfort was her supervision. They watched her with unwearied tenderness, and carefully guarded her from fatigue. As her strength increased, she sat up and conversed with them at night, or listened as William read aloud, after the children's lessons had been learned. After she seemed to be fully recovered, William

one evening motioned to Sanford to take a seat, at the same time saying :

“Grandma, can’t you tell us why it is some people object to the Baptists so much? You remember you promised once to tell us ; or do you feel too tired this evening to talk ?”

“O, no, I am not too tired. Thank the Lord, I feel about as strong as usual. Yes, my dear children, I have heard many hard things said about the Baptists in my life, and I am willing to tell you, so you may be prepared to answer such things when you hear them yourselves ; but let me warn you not to let any of these things move you to prejudice against other Christians, or embitter your feelings toward them. Remember, the Bible says, ‘Pray for those who despitefully use you and persecute you.’ We are exhorted to contend earnestly ‘for the faith once delivered to the saints ; and we can not do that effectually without being able to answer all the objections brought against us ; but, my dears, let it be done

in love, not in anger; with truth, not with ridicule. It is a common charge against us, that we are the most bigoted people in the world."

"I think it is," said Sanford; "for I have often heard it, and that, too, in the presence of Baptists, who made no reply to it."

"Well! did you think the charge was a true one because you never heard a reply to it?"

"I never thought much about it, Mr. Blackwell; but it does seem to me, that if it had not been true they would have made some effort to refute it, or, at least, have denied it."

"That is no sign that it *could not* be refuted; some people make no answer to false charges, because they think it not worth while; some, because they object to controversy; others, because they have never thought upon the subject, and really can not answer them. They are like William was when he heard them accused of being of modern origin; he was distressed because he

didn't know but it might be true; for he had never given himself the trouble to learn anything about it. It is very true, we are often accused of bigotry, and I sometimes think that those who make the charge do not even understand the meaning of the word."

"La! pa, I know what it means myself; I learned it yesterday evening in my lesson."

"Be *done*, Mary," said grandmother; "how often have I told you that it is not polite for little girls to speak till they are spoken to? Shell those pease, you and Sam; you can do that and listen too." She had settled them down with a basket of dried pease between them, and Barton with one of beans, to shell for winter use, saying it had been put off too long already."

"I must beg you to countermand your order for once, mother," said Mr. Blackwell, "for I would like for Mary to tell me, if she knows, what bigotry means."

"To be sure; I have no objection to her answering a question when asked, for that

would be impolite. Tell your pa, Mary, what is the meaning of the word."

"Bigotry means excessive prejudice, or unreasonable zeal in favor of a party or opinion; that is what it says in the dictionary."

"Now, William, or Sanford, whichever chooses to answer, what do you call excessive prejudice?"

"Why," said Sanford, "whenever a man is so prejudiced in favor of an opinion that he will not yield it even when convinced it is wrong; in fact, will not listen to reason on the subject."

"Did you ever know a *Baptist* who refused to yield when convinced of error? I mean, on the subject of religion, or of Church policy; that is the subject under discussion now."

"No, sir; for I never knew one convinced of error; they have Bible proof for all their practices, as far as I know; we discussed that last week, you remember."

"Then, can you call a man a bigot be-



cause he refuses to yield a point that he knows is right, and can give the best of reasons for?"

"No, sir; I would not."

"Would you call him a bigot for being attached to the truth, the Gospel truth I mean, and for being willing to defend it, on all occasions, with sound Scriptural argument?"

"No, sir; that is enjoined upon them by the Scripture itself, if I am not mistaken; for Paul disputed 'daily in the school of one Tyrannus;' and he is not called a bigot; and the first Christians were exhorted to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints; surely if it was right for Christians *then*, it is right *now*."

"Would you call it bigotry for a man to adhere tenaciously to what he conscientiously believed to be the truth as it is in Jesus, even though he should be persecuted for it?"

"No, sir; if we did, we should accuse the martyrs of bigotry, for they suffered death

in its most appalling forms, rather than compromise their consciences."

"We are accused of bigotry, then, without any real foundation. We have no doctrine which we do not conscientiously believe is founded on Scripture. We consider it our duty to practice it, because Christ has commanded us to observe all his sayings: 'Ye are my friends,' said he, 'if ye do whatever I command you;' *not*, if you obey only so far as it meets with the approval of your friends, or those in authority. We do not yield our opinions, because we have never been convinced that they are wrong; and we only claim the same privilege with others, namely, that of enjoying our religious opinions in peace, and of teaching them, in a quiet way, to our children, or to those who come to us for instruction. Other denominations do the same, and nothing is thought of it; but the Baptists are cried down as bigots merely for daring to exercise their own judgments in matters of

religion, and for teaching their own peculiar views."

"Father," said William, "Mary gave us another definition of the word, which you have not noticed yet: unreasonable zeal in favor of a party or opinion. Can the Baptists be accused of *that*?"

"It depends, somewhat, upon the meaning you attach to unreasonable."

"I suppose, to be unreasonable about a thing, a man would have to do that which is contrary to sound judgment and common sense; and I don't know how he could be unreasonable in matters of religion."

"If his heart is right he could not, my son," said Mrs. Patterson; "for a Christian who does his duty will pray the Lord daily to lead him in the path of truth and justice; and God never neglects a single petition of one of his children, and never leads them into error. No, there is no danger that a man will go contrary to reason in the service

of God, if he only obeys God's law as he finds it in the Bible."

"The question now, mother, is not, whether a true Christian, living in obedience to God's laws, can act unreasonably in his service; but, whether the *Baptists*, as a denomination, exercise an unreasonable zeal in promoting the cause of religion, or in teaching their own peculiar views."

"Well, George, our peculiar views are obtained from the Bible; are they not?"

"Yes, ma'am; we proved that from the Scriptures last week, when we were trying to show William that we are not of modern origin."

"Of course it is right, (and I hope no one will deny it,) to teach the pure word of God, in the Church or the Sabbath-school, or at the fireside. Other professing Christians teach their doctrines upon all occasions, and in every way. Why, when I was young, I used to read a great many religious stories; and I scarcely ever picked up one that did not teach Pedobaptist sentiments. Now,

if it is right for them to be so very zealous in teaching doctrines, many of which are only the commandments of men, how can it be wrong for us, who hold the truth just as God gave it to us?"

"But, Mrs. Patterson, they believe that they hold the true doctrines too."

"They have no right to believe it, Sanford, for they can understand the Bible, and they know all their practices are not taught there; and their learned men know better, for in their commentaries they teach different views from those they practice."

"Setting aside the customs of other denominations," said Mr. Blackwell, "let us see what is the practice of Baptists in these matters. In the first place, our faith is founded upon the pure word of God; this we teach from our pulpits, quietly, and without abusing others, and we are now beginning to teach them in our Sabbath-schools; we also have papers printed, teaching the same views, for our own and our children's benefit, and to show to the community at large what

we believe. At our firesides, in our family circles, if a question occurs, we explain it as we believe to be right; we also contribute of our money to send books and missionaries to the heathen, and we expect them to teach the Bible just as it is; and, of course, that is teaching our peculiar views. Do you think there is anything very unreasonable in this?"

"No, sir."

"We believe it to be our duty to declare the whole counsel of God; that it is a sin to add to or take from the word of God, or to conceal, or pass over carelessly any text, to gain the favor of men, 'for all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.'—2 Tim. iii: 16. There is one view of the subject, however, which we have not noticed yet."

"George, suppose we defer that till another evening; I am very tired."

"Certainly. Excuse me, mother, for tax-

ing your strength so long to-night. I think I would like to have Reynolds with us while we are on this subject. I presume he does not care much to read alone."



## CHAPTER VIII.

## BAPTIST BIGOTRY AND BAPTIST POVERTY.

"Ye shall observe to do, therefore, as the Lord your God hath commanded you: ye shall not turn to the right hand or to the left."—DEUT. v : 32.



FEW evenings afterward, Mr. Reynolds was invited to tea. Sanford Martin had given him an account of their last evening's conversation at Mr. Blackwell's, and after listening till he was through, he laughingly remarked: "And you were fully convinced by it, were you, Sanford?"

"I could n't help being convinced by the truth, neither could you, if you had heard it as I did."

"Pshaw! you are young yet, Sanford, and do n't know how to argue the points with an old soldier like the 'boss;' I'll warrant



you I can tell him some things *you* never thought of."

"No doubt you can; but from all I have heard, and from what I know together, I am inclined to believe that the Baptists have the truth on their side, and are very apt to answer any objection that can be brought against them, especially if you attack one of ordinary intelligence."

"Humph! maybe so."

As Mr. Blackwell laid aside his pipe after supper, he changed the conversation, which was going on in rather a lively strain, by saying:

"We were very much interested a few evenings since, Reynolds, in examining the charge of bigotry so frequently made against the Baptists, but we didn't get quite through; and I proposed to defer it till you could be with us."

"Yes, sir, Sanford told me something about it; and he seems to fall in with your views entirely. You and Mrs. Patterson together have well-nigh made a Baptist of him."

“O dear,” said Mrs. Patterson, “we do not want him to be a Baptist because we are, or take it for granted we are right, without examining; but try us by the word of God, and if our principles do not agree with that, we do not wish him to believe them. No; I wish Sanford, and you too, were good Christians and consistent Baptists, but I want the grace of God to make you so, not my poor talk.”

“Well, I suppose you say the Baptists are not bigoted, Mr. Blackwell; but I hope you will not be offended if I tell you what I think.”

“No, no; out with it.”

“Here is Mr. Hilson, the pastor of this Church at Hampton, who never comes across a text concerning baptism but he must take particular pains to explain it to mean immersion; and he never baptizes one without making a long talk upon the subject of baptism, or reading all the Testament says about it, before going into the water.”

“Well, I see nothing so very objection-

able about that. What is a preacher's duty, Reynolds?"

"To explain the Bible to others, of course; to enforce upon them, especially upon Christians, the propriety of obeying its precepts, the obligations they are under to render obedience to all God's commands, and to warn them of the danger of living in rebellion against him."

"Should a preacher shrink from his duty for fear of offending a few of his hearers?"

"No, sir."

"Remember, God calls him to preach his *whole* Gospel, not a part of it, and he will hold him responsible for the manner in which he discharges his duty. If he suppresses a part of the truth he commits a sin in the sight of God. And then he is bound to explain the Bible according to his own conscientious belief of it, and to explain it so that others may understand. Now, do you not believe it is a Christian's duty to be baptized?"

"Yes; and I believe immersion is the

only Scriptural mode; but there is no use for a man to harp upon it always."

"He can't harp upon it always, if he only mentions it upon the occasions you speak of; and it is as much his duty to explain a text concerning baptism, as to explain any other part of the Bible; to exhort Christians to obey that command of God, as well as any other. We are also willing that every one should know our reasons for our peculiar views, for we have good Bible reasons for them; and you, as well as every one else, will acknowledge that the most suitable time for explaining why we immerse is just as the ordinance is about to be administered."

"O, yes! but here is another thing. You Baptists believe that no denomination of Christians is right but yourselves, and I am sure that I have seen good people who belong to other Churches."

"For a Church to be *right*, Mr. Reynolds, it must be just such a Church as those which were established by the apostles. Now, if

any Baptist Church is just such a Church, it is right, and if any body, calling itself a Church, is not just like this Baptist Church, it can not be like the apostolic Church, and so can not be right."

"Yes, sir; that is as plain as that things which are equal to the same thing are equal, to one another."

"It follows, then, that if we are right others are *not* right. And if we speak the truth we must *say* they are not right in just so far as they differ from us."

"We do not say that none but ourselves are Christians; you never hear the Baptists say *that*; but that *we* alone have a regular Scriptural form of Church government, and a Scriptural membership and ordinances. Now, I can prove to you that there is no bigotry in this. Where would you look for a pattern of a Church?"

"In the New Testament, I should think."

"Well! did n't we examine last week, and find our Churches to be exactly after the model of those in the New Testament?"

"Yes, sir; I know we did."

"Can two things, widely different from each other, be formed after the same pattern?"

"No, sir."

"Which would you think to be right, the one that corresponded with the pattern, or the one that was different from it?"

"The one that agreed with the pattern, certainly."

"Then the Baptist Churches agree with the description; we have proved that from the Bible; therefore, they must be right; and if they are right, others widely differing from them, and from the original pattern, can not be right too; that would be contrary to sound reason and judgment. Don't you see?"

"Yes, sir; I understand."

"We only exercise the same privilege that every freeman does, when we express our firm conviction that we alone are right in our peculiar Church organizations, doctrines, and practices; and the Bible will

bear us out in this same belief. I confess you are sharper sighted than I am if you see any bigotry in this. If we believe we are right, there is no law which forbids our saying so."

"No; there is no law to prevent it. Every man has a right to express his opinion, and act according to his own conscientious belief, especially in religious matters; but then, Mr. Blackwell, don't you think you rather boast of it a little, or pride yourselves upon what you call a superiority, in this respect, to other Churches."

"Well, I don't know," replied he, laughing; "perhaps you have heard some Baptists boast of it; but it is not a general thing among us. We are, indeed, proud that we are counted worthy to suffer shame for Christ's sake; and are happy, very happy, that God has given us so many proofs of his approbation in every age of the world. His watchcare has been over us all the time, and though we have passed through many severe persecutions, his grace has sus-

tained us through all. We believe that he still watches over us, that he blesses us as he sees we need, and will not suffer us to be tried beyond our strength. What you mistook for pride is, I presume, a self-satisfied air and an independent bearing we have, which arises from a consciousness that we are right. When a man knows he is living in the discharge of duty, he is apt to have a free, open-hearted way about him, which can not possibly be imitated by one who is doubtful whether he is right or not; or thinks some other way will do as well. Don't you think so?"

"Yes, yes; I fear I accused you wrongfully. It does do a man a great deal of good to know he is doing his duty. Nothing like having a clear conscience. But then you Baptists have a notion that nobody can baptize but one of your own preachers. You won't take a man from another Church without baptizing him over again, even though he has been immersed after your own fashion. There is Miss



Harper, whom a Methodist preacher dipped about two years ago, (and it was well done too, for I saw it,) yet when she took a notion, a little while back, to join the Baptists, Mr. Hilson dipped her again. Now, don't you call that a little bigoted—as if you wanted to monopolize one of the ordinances of the Church?" And crossing his knees, resting his elbow on them, he looked in Mr. Blackwell's face with a quizzical, good-humored expression.

"You are mistaken," said William; "Mr. Hilson did not baptize her over again, for she had never been baptized before."

"I know that is what you Baptists say; and that is wherein I think you are bigoted, or rather stiff-necked."

"Reynolds," said Mr. Blackwell, "would you call us bigoted for holding an opinion based entirely upon Scripture?"

"Certainly not; but does the Bible say that nobody but the Baptists have a right to immerse?"

"Not in that language. But tell me who

administered the ordinance of baptism in the days of the apostles?"

"The preachers, I guess; the same who do it now."

"By whom were these preachers ordained, and authorized to baptize?"

"By the Churches, or by the Church of which they were members."

"And in our examination of these Churches last week, did n't we find that they were all Baptist Churches?"

"Yes, sir; so Sanford told me. You remember I was not with you."

"We find no account in the Bible of any other society that was authorized to administer any of the ordinances; and now, when we find them doing so, we have no right to receive one of their acts as legal. We reject their baptism, because we find none such in the Bible; for whatever is not found in the Gospel is not Gospel order. Pedobaptist immersions are not in the Gospel, for in those days *there were no Pedobaptist societies*. So when we receive an individual

who has been immersed by them, we can not receive their baptism, because it was not done in accordance with the Gospel. There is no bigotry in this; the ordinances were delivered only to the Church of God; but a society which does not correspond in all essential particulars exactly to the pattern given in the Testament, can not be a true Church, no matter how pious the members may be; and, therefore, they have no authority to administer any of the ordinances. They, indeed, assume the responsibility, and arrogate to themselves the right to do so; but should we receive their acts as legal, we would, thereby, concede to them the right to change the ordinances of God's house, and proclaim to the world that *we* consider it of minor importance whether we kept them pure, as they were once delivered unto us, or not. Those who judge us so harshly in this respect, entirely misunderstand us. We bear no malice toward other denominations; we believe that many of their members are truly pious; and we love

an humble follower of Christ wherever we may find him. We would not crush them if we could, nor *force* them to a change of views; but, in all kindness, we wish to convince them of their error by the testimony of Scripture alone, and persuade them, by the love they bear our common Savior, to cease to pervert his laws, to forsake the traditions of men, and come up to the standard laid down in the Gospel. We love them, but we love the Savior more, and must keep the ordinances of the Church pure, even though we should offend many devoted Christians. We are not left to do, in this respect, as our feelings or weak judgments might dictate, but as we are directed in the Bible."

After a few moments' silence William said:

"Father, it seems that Mr. Reynolds has no more objections to make. What remark was it that you left unfinished the last night we conversed upon this subject?"

"Ah! there is one feature we have not

noticed yet: a bigot is very apt to be, at heart, if not in practice, a persecutor; the two ideas seem to be inseparable. A man can not be excessively prejudiced in favor of his own views, and, at the same time, be liberal toward others differing from him. He wants everybody to believe as he does, and if they can not be persuaded to it, he will try to force, if it is in his power. This you know to be a fact. Now, Reynolds, you have read a great deal of history; tell me, did you ever read of a persecution begun, or carried on, or even sanctioned by Baptists?"

"No, sir," said he, after a long pause; "I do n't remember that I ever did; I have read of persecutions, especially in the old countries, by Catholics, and by Episcopalians, and by Presbyterians, and by Lutherans, but not by the Baptists."

"No, my dear sir; and you never will. That is something the Baptists will never do."

"Hey! pa, are you a prophet?" and Mary

looked sideways at her grandma, as if she expected a reproof; but the old lady contented herself with raising her glasses, and giving her a sharp look.

“No, my daughter, I am not a prophet; but persecution is not of the spirit of Christ, and his people have too much of his spirit to do a thing so opposite to the love and charity inculcated by his teaching. He commands us to love our enemies, to do good to those who hate us, and pray for those who despitefully use us and persecute us; and though we do not always obey this precept as fully as we should, we, at least, refrain from doing evil to those who differ from us in religion. We invite to open and free discussion, and though we would be glad to have all agree with us in the right, yet we never attempt to force them, and never will; for a true Church of Christ never persecutes.”

“There is another objection made to the Baptists, which I expect Mr. Reynolds feels a delicacy in mentioning,” said Mrs. Pat-

terson. "It is so weak that it scarcely deserves a thought; but we may as well notice it as we pass along. I have heard some frivolous people say, that they would not join the Baptist Church, because the members are such common folks; generally poor, or of moderate means; their preachers are plain in their manners and dress, and there is nothing grand or imposing in their worship."

"Yes, ma'am," said Mr. Reynolds, "I have often heard the same thing, but I would not repeat such a remark in the presence of Baptists, for I respect you too much to wound your feelings."

"O, no; that does not move us at all, Christ foretold we should be hated of all men for his sake, and we try not to murmur at anything of the kind. I expect our plain houses of worship, and simple services do look rather contemptible to one who has been all his life accustomed to the glitter and pomp of some of the Protestant services. And so, I suppose, did the simple

preaching of the Savior, and the quiet, unpretending meetings of the first Churches, appear to the Jews, who had been accustomed to worship in a magnificent temple, where a high priest, splendidly adorned, officiated at the altar, offering sacrifices and burning costly incense daily. Yes, I suspect we do look common to them; but that is nothing while Christ condescends to own us for his people."

"Pa," said Mary, quickly, "was not Christ a poor man?"

"Yes, my child; he sanctified poverty and made it honorable. He was so poor that he had not 'where to lay his head.'—Matt. viii: 20. His first disciples, those whom he called his brethren, were poor fishermen. The haughty Jews objected to Christ that he was the son of a carpenter, (Mark vi: 3,) and we need not expect any better for ourselves. We are willing to bear the same reproach with our Savior. Besides, this charge, like many others, is not strictly true; the number of our home



and foreign missionaries, of our benevolent societies, the amount of money expended in educating our ministers, and in circulating our religious literature, proves that the Baptists are far from being a poor people. We are plain, it is true; but we consider our money as a gift from God, and believe he is better pleased to have it spent in propagating his Gospel, and in doing good to our fellow-men, than in costly dress, or in expensive and showy houses of worship. As for our plain manner of worship, we derived it from Christ and the first Churches. There was no pomp or glittering show in their services. They read the Scriptures, expounded them, sang and prayed, just as we do, yet we are satisfied to follow their example, and leave it to others to introduce pomp and show if they find it too plain. Even while Christ was on earth you remember the Pharisees tried to prevent the officers from believing on him, by this scornful expression: 'Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him?' (John

vii: 48;) which was equivalent to asking them if they would equalize themselves with the common people, by believing on one whom the Pharisees and rulers rejected. You accuse us of denominational pride, Reynolds. We are, indeed, proud that we are considered worthy to bear the same reproaches that fell upon our Savior; and we never get angry at any scornful remarks that are made upon our practices; but sometimes it excites our laughter to think our enemies are reduced to the necessity of using such a weapon as ridicule against us. When a man begins to ridicule his opponent, it argues that he is sensible of the weakness of his cause."



## CHAPTER IX.

## BAPTIST WANT OF LIBERALITY AND CLOSE COMMUNION.

"Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances as I have delivered them to you."—1 COR. xi: 2.

**R**AIN, rain, rain. So the children were kept at home and studied their lessons. Mary attended to all the domestic affairs for her grandmother, thus saving the old lady from any exposure to the wet, while Barton and Sam kept a bright, crackling fire for them all day. About two o'clock it began to sleet, and long before night the streets and roads were quite slippery. Little Laura evinced her uneasiness for "papa and brother" by going to the front windows and straining her eyes down street, till she was completely chilled with the cold. Running

to the fire to warm, the others would try to detain her by begging her to join in their play. But no, she could not play while she thought her papa was uncomfortable. Finally, returning to the fire after a very long watch, shivering with cold, in a trembling voice, and eyes filled with tears, she inquired:

“Grandma, it is so cold, and getting dark, won’t papa and brother freeze?”

“O, no, my little one; they are well and strong, and will walk so fast they will keep themselves warm.”

“But, grandma, they will slip down and get hurt; then they will freeze,” said the child, not at all pacified. Mary, noticing how cold and distressed she was, left off play, took her in her lap by the fire, and began telling her a pretty story she had read a few days before. She sat still and seemed entertained, but when the latch of the front gate clicked, with a joyful shout, “There’s pa!” she sprang from Mary’s lap, and opening the front door, she admitted

the father, brother, Mr. Martin, and a draught of cold, sleety air, which last well-nigh took the little one's breath.

Her father caught her up in his arms, while William closed the door, and, advancing to the fire, said :

"I am glad to see you so comfortable, mother. I have invited Sanford to spend the night with us ; in fact, I think he would hardly be able to keep his feet after dark."

"Certainly ; I am glad you did ; take a seat, Sanford. Barton and Sam have kept me such good fires to-day I haven't felt the cold."

"That is right, boys ; never let grandma or sisters suffer, or be put to any inconvenience that you can prevent."

All took their seats but William, who, calling to Barton, went out to feed the horse, the cow and calf, and put them under shelter, to provide wood enough for night and morning, and put it in a dry place.

"Father," said Sam, "little sis liked to cried, because she thought you'd freeze."

Mr. Blackwell pressed her to his bosom, and as he looked into the bright blue eyes turned up to his, the memory of former days, when eyes *so like these* had watched for him, and sparkled with delight at his coming, came over him so sadly that he could scarce refrain from weeping himself.

"Papa," said she, softly, "didn't you get cold?"

"O, yes, my pet; but no danger of freezing in such weather while one is able to walk; needn't be uneasy about papa, darling, I could n't suffer while I have so many friends around me."

"Laura, honey," said grandma, "you were so glad to see your papa that you forgot his gown and slippers."

"O, yes, papa, excuse me;" and she soon brought them, while Sam left Mr. Martin's knee long enough to put away his boots.

William and Barton having finished their work, came in, and, as they all gathered round the comfortable fireside, Mr. Martin observed:

“We are all so cozy here, I would like for Mrs. Patterson to tell us some more of the slurs she has heard cast upon the Baptists.”

“I don’t know that everybody would call them slurs,” replied she; “they only say they object to the Baptists so and so; some accuse us of being very selfish, and pretend to be so liberal and large-hearted themselves that they have no patience with our narrow notions.”

“Yes, madam,” said Sanford; “I have heard that too, and it is urged, I believe, as a proof of it, that you will commune with no other Christians, nor suffer them to commune with you; and I confess it does look a little stiff and cold to see the Baptists sitting back, prim and immovable, when all other Christians in the house are laying aside their differences and meeting together at the Lord’s table; and I am not alone,” said he, hastily, as he saw Mr. Blackwell smile, “for I have heard some of your own *Baptist* brethren and sisters say the very same thing.”

“No doubt you have, Sanford, for our brethren and sisters are only mortals, with frail, human natures; and, unfortunately, some of them have so much of the weaker part of humanity, that they prefer to risk the displeasure of God by perverting his ordinances, than of incurring the ill-will of their fellow-mortals, by following Christ in all things. Such Baptists have more of the milk of human kindness than the firmness of the Christian soldier. They would not stand persecution very well. If the preservation of the truth depended upon such, there would, I fear, be but very little of it kept entirely pure.”

“But, father,” said William, “that’s one thing that troubles me sometimes. Are we following Christ in this? I have heard the Methodists and Presbyterians say, when inviting all others to commune, that they had no right to debar any one from coming to the Lord’s table. Have we any right to do it either?”



“My son, who instituted the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper?”

“Christ.”

“With whom did the Savior commune?”

“His disciples, father; but other denominations profess to be his disciples as well as we.”

“I know they do; and I hope and believe that many of them are his disciples at heart; but, my dear boy, were there any Pedobaptists in the time of the Savior or of the apostles?”

“No, sir. We have seen that there were not.”

“And don’t you suppose that all those with whom Christ communed had been regularly immersed?”

“O, yes, sir; for there was no such things as sprinkling or pouring known in those days.”

“As he communed only with those who had been baptized, don’t you suppose that he intended only such as had been baptized should partake of his supper?”

"Yes, sir, I think so."

"But," said Mr. Martin, "Pedobaptists contend that they *have* been baptized."

"So they do, Sanford, because they call their sprinkling or pouring baptism. But what do you suppose Christ meant by baptism?" asked Mrs. Patterson.

"Well, I presume he meant immersion, for he was immersed himself; and he would hardly have gone into the water if he had not intended his followers to do so."

"In addition to this, all the baptisms we read of in the Testament were immersions, and it is natural to suppose that those who lived in the days of Christ baptized aright, or he would have corrected them. Now, it is our duty to keep the sacrament of the Lord's Supper just as he delivered it to us; so we can not invite the unbaptized to commune with us, nor can we partake with them, without forsaking the example of our Savior. Let me ask you another question, Sanford. Is the Lord's Supper an ordinance *in* the Church or *out* of it?"

“It is to be observed by the Church alone, and belongs exclusively to it.”

“Then, as Christ partook of it only with his disciples, and enjoined it upon them alone, to do it in remembrance of him, have we any right to take it *out* of the Church?”

“No, sir. And in our examination of the Testament, we found the Baptist Churches to be just such as those instituted by the apostles, and, of course, the only true Churches; and”—

“And so they have no right to offer one of the ordinances of Christ’s Church, which was instituted by Christ himself, to a society whose teachings and practices are many of them opposed to the commands of Christ, and whose existence was even unknown in his day,” said William, finishing his sentence for him.

“Yes, that is about what I was going to say,” but Sanford thought of Mr. Reynolds’s late jeer, and did not like to yield so easily, so he rallied again by saying: “There are many members of the Baptist Churches, who

are not so consistent in their lives, as professors of religion, as some of the Pedobaptists whom you reject, yet you allow *them* to commune without a word of opposition."

"I know, Sanford, wicked persons have sometimes communed with us, for we have been obliged to exclude them from our fellowship after they had been members with us for years ; but you must remember that, at the time they partook of the Supper, they were regular members of a Church formed after the pattern of the first Churches. Sometimes, when a Baptist has been disorderly, he is under censure of the Church some time before his case is decided ; but you never saw one commune under such circumstances, for we invite only such of our own denomination even, who know themselves to be in full fellowship. We do not pretend to search the heart, for that we can not do, nor is it expected of us ; but it is our duty, as guardians of the institution which Christ ordained and committed to our keeping, to preserve it just as he gave it to

us, and to administer the Supper only to such as have complied with all his requisitions. We have not put any barrier around the table ; Christ did it, and we, as his faithful servants, have no right to take the bread and wine from it, and hand to those who *will not come within* the inclosure. We would be traitors to the trust our Master reposes in us if we did. No, indeed ; if it were the *Baptist's* table, then it would be our privilege to invite our friends to partake with us, if we felt so disposed, whether they complied with all the demands of the Gospel or not. We could say we loved our brother, and sister, and neighbor, and felt like communing with them in spite of their deficiencies ; but, my dear boy, it is the *Lord's* table, and, for that reason, we can invite to it only such as he invited himself. If we exceeded his directions in this thing, we would be just as criminal as if we came short of them. We don't say who shall come to his table ; he has said it, and we must abide by his directions."

“But, Mr. Blackwell, sometimes a member goes from your Church and joins the Pedobaptists; now he has been regularly baptized according to your own notions of baptism; but, by your rules, he is excluded from your communion-table, in common with other Pedobaptists.”

“Yes; for he is no longer a member of a Church; and when he joins one of those societies, he, by that act, declares that it is of no importance whether we obey Christ in all things, or follow the traditions of men. He abjures some of the doctrines of Scripture, and avows his belief in the commandments of men as paramount to those of Christ. He is not in fellowship with us; he has gone without the inclosure, and we have no more right to hand the elements to him than to one who has never been within. So with one whom we have excluded from our fellowship; he has become a traitor to his Lord, and we, as faithful servants of our Master, and executors of his laws, are obliged to put him without the kingdom,

and refuse him all the privileges belonging to loyal subjects. But I see that Mary has supper nearly ready, and the savory smell of oysters is too tempting to be resisted. I suspect that is the reason Mary has been so busily passing to and fro in the dining-room."

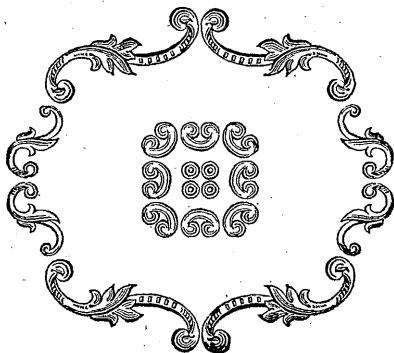
"Yes," said Mrs. Patterson, "she begged me to let her assist Jane in preparing them, according to her own notions; so you will have a sample of her cooking to-night. There's her bell; come in."

All partook so heartily of Mary's stewed oysters, and praised them so much that she began to feel quite dignified, and thought she would soon be an accomplished housekeeper.

"Now," said Mr. Blackwell, as they rose from the table, "mother and I must have our smoke before we talk much, and by that time Mary will be done in the dining-room. Take a seat, Sanford, and make yourself comfortable."

Sanford obeyed, by taking a seat, and

drawing Sam on his knee. Laura cuddled herself up in her father's lap for the remainder of the evening. It never was any interruption to him to have his little pet in his arms; he could read, smoke, or talk with her in his lap as well as without.





## CHAPTER X.

"If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed."—2 JOHN : 10.

"**W**ELL, Sanford," remarked Mr. Blackwell, as he laid aside his pipe, "do you still think the Baptists very selfish for not communing with other sects?"

"No, sir; I do not know whether it is owing to the influence of your good supper or good logic, but I am willing to admit the Baptists are right about that thing. However, I still think you are very exclusive in some of your practices. For instance, here is Mr. Hilson, your pastor, who will not preach with a Pedobaptist, nor invite one to assist him in a meeting, though there may be ever so many of them about, and he entirely alone. You don't deny

that they are Christians, and many of them able men, do you?"

"O, no. We believe there is a great deal of real piety among their preachers; some of them are remarkably zealous in promoting the spread of the Gospel, as they understand it, and celebrated for their learning. But all these, taken together, do not make it our duty to invite them to preach."

"I do n't see how you can refuse, Mr. Blackwell, believing as you do."

"Our belief is the very reason we do refuse. John says: 'If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not in your house, neither bid him God speed.' Now these preach as many things which are at variance with the Gospel, and which we do not believe. By inviting them to preach with us, we would thereby give our countenance to false doctrine and bid him him 'God speed' in his errors. All who saw them preaching together, would think, of course, that the Baptists considered it of very little import-

ance what a man believes, and instead of his advancing the truth, or doing any real good by his mistaken politeness, he is promoting error. If one of our own preachers would preach the same doctrines the Pedobaptists do, unless we could convince him of his error, we would certainly silence him from preaching, and if we did not consider *him* worthy of teaching in our pulpit, how could we consistently invite another man to teach the same doctrines, merely because he belongs to a different sect? For instance, infant baptism is one of the leading doctrines of the Pedobaptists; but suppose one of our preachers were to profess to believe it, and persist in teaching it, we would soon exclude him from our pulpits."

"Father, is it right to baptize infants?"

"Well, my daughter, there is no precept or example in favor of it in the Bible, and whatever is not taught in the Scripture can not be right for a Church to practice. We have examined the Gospel description of a Church faithfully, and we found no infants

mentioned in it; and in all the baptisms mentioned there were no children. It is not in the Bible, my children."

"La, father! when Mr. Todd baptized Mr. Munson's children he read something about the people bringing their children to Christ while he was on earth, and he took them in his arms. Is not that in the Bible?"

"Yes; they did bring them, and he did take them in his arms, but it was to *bless*, *not* to baptize them. Here is the verse," said he, opening the Testament and reading it: 'And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.'—Mark x: 16. You see there is no baptism here."

"Yes; but, father, he said children had been in the Church ever since the days of Abraham; and that they had no right to exclude them *now*."

"Why, Mary," said grandmother, "you have forgotten, my child; do we go back to the days of Abraham to find an ordinance of a Christian Church which was founded

by Christ hundreds of years *after* the time of Abraham?"

"O, no, ma'am; I forgot; pa explained that to me once."

"We, as a Church, have nothing to do with the rites and ceremonies of the Mosaic dispensation. Christ, by his death, satisfied all the demands of the law, and abolished its force. He gave us a new dispensation, and instituted a new order of things entirely. This is found in the New Testament, and in our examination of the Churches which he ordained, we find not one word said about infants; so they certainly formed no part of the first Churches, the Gospel being witness. Now, Sanford, here is the wrong in a Baptist preacher's joining or affiliating with a Pedobaptist in preaching. By doing so, he virtually concedes to him the right to pervert the Scripture, to teach for doctrines the commandments of men, and sanctions the errors which he propagates."

"Pa, I don't quite understand you," said Barton.

“My son, if a lecturer on any particular science, and one whom I had often heard, were to come into this neighborhood, and I were to invite him into my house, and offer him a room in which to deliver his lectures, would not everybody take it for granted that I believed the opinions he advanced, and considered him worthy to teach that science?”

“Yes, sir; they couldn’t help but think it, especially as you had heard him before, and had had an opportunity of knowing what he believed.”

“So when a minister invites another into his pulpit everybody has a right to think that he believes the doctrines the other one teaches, and that he is every way qualified to preach the Gospel. But Baptists do not believe in many of the doctrines of the Pedobaptists, for they find no authority for them in the Bible; then, how can they, with a clear conscience, invite them to lead the people into error, is more than I can see. Besides, though many of them are right, as

far as piety, talents, and social position will go, yet with all this, not one is Scripturally authorized to preach the Gospel, and we exceed our powers when we invite them to do so."

"Dear me, Mr. Blackwell! you don't say they have no right to preach, do you?

"Not much more right than I have, Sanford; they might teach in the family circle as I am doing, so far as they are able to instruct correctly, but to take charge of a Church, and administer the ordinances of God's house, they have no more authority for it than I have. You know there is some action of a Church necessary before they are authorized to preach and found Churches. We read of elders and deacons in the Testament, but we also read of their ordination before entering upon their ministry. That we found when discussing the origin of Baptist Churches. Now, suppose I believed that I were called to preach, and were to refuse to be ordained by the Church, would you think my brethren would be

doing wrong to exclude me from their pulpits?"

"No, sir; but, Mr. Blackwell, these Pe-dobaptist preachers *are* ordained by their own denomination in their peculiar way."

"I know they are. Now, if I were to go to some society founded by man, teaching principles and performing rites instituted by man, and get them to ordain me, would you consider it a Gospel ordination, or think my brethren were bound to receive me as a Gospel minister, and invite me into their pulpits?"

"No, sir."

"It would seem, then, that Baptists ought not to invite even one of their own number to preach for them, unless he has authority from a Baptist Church."

"Yes, sir; but a Baptist Church, by inviting him, gives him authority."

"Then the question is, whether a Baptist Church has the right to give the authority to one who is not a member of a Gospel Church?"



“Now, you remember there are no such Churches found in the Testament as the Pedobaptists. They are not Gospel Churches, or they would be described *there*; and as the ordination of a minister is an act belonging exclusively to a Church of Christ, so a society originating with man, and widely differing, in doctrines and practices, from the Gospel Churches, has no right to perform that act. It is true they assume the right, and feel very much offended when one doubts it. We are accused of narrow-mindedness, selfishness, etc., because we object to them on that score; but with the Bible alone for our guide, we can not receive them. The society from which they received their authority is an institution of man, and all its acts illegal. If we unite with them, we might as well unite with a priest of Rome, for one has as much of a Scripture origin as the other. The Protestant Churches do not agree, in organization and ordinances, with the pattern in the Testament, any more perfectly than the Church of Rome, and if

we exclude a priest on account of his apostate origin, we must, to be consistent, exclude a preacher who has a similar defect."

"But the labors of these ministers are often blessed to the conversion of others. Do you suppose God would bless a man in error?"

"God will bless his truth, my dear sir, no matter by whom it is spoken. These preachers teach some of the fundamental doctrines of Scripture, though their creed is largely mixed with error. Some of them teach repentance from sin, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; two leading doctrines of the Gospel. God has said, his word shall not return unto him void, and he will not refuse to bless his truth, because spoken by one who does not teach *all the truth*, and in some things teaches error. This is no evidence that he approves all the acts or creed of that man, but only that he makes the portion of truth which he does preach, an instrument in his hands for the conversion of others. A scoffer or an infidel, uttering a

precious promise of God, even though he does it in jest, may become, in his hands, the means of awakening a sinner, or of conveying comfort to a troubled soul. But it is God's truth that is blessed, not the man. We have had instances of ministers, who, after preaching with great success for a number of years, were found to be notoriously wicked men ; but, according to your principles, we should continue to invite him to preach till he dies, for he was as much of a sinner before found out, as afterward. It is no evidence that a man is not in error because God does not suffer his truth to fall to the ground when spoken by him, neither is it an evidence that one is wrong because he preaches sometimes without any apparent success, for Christ numbered but few disciples after a ministry of three years. Some of the Pedobaptist ministers, we grant, are right in heart ; that is, we believe they have been converted by the grace of God, and are his devoted servants ; but they err in practice, and they teach that error to others.

They have received their authority to preach from an apostate source; they belong to a society whose official acts are null and void, because they are not of Gospel origin. They come to us teaching *another doctrine* besides that we have received from God, and we are warned 'not to receive such into our house, nor bid them God speed,' for, adds John, 'He that biddeth him God speed, is partaker of his evil deeds.'—2 John: 11. By inviting them to preach, we would be bidding them 'God speed,' and so disobeying an injunction of Scripture. Do you think we should do that?"

"No, sir; certainly not disobey God. However, it would be well to ask him for politeness' sake. It is only the courtesy due from one gentleman to another. (Here he observed Mrs. Patterson lay down her knitting, raise her spectacles, and look at him with a keen expression, under which he began to wince.) You profess to take Christ for an example, Mr. Blackwell, and he was a polite man, was he not?"

“Yes; but, my dear sir, Christ never sacrificed principle to politeness. It would be contrary to true politeness to invite a man to preach, and then have to get up and preach an entirely different doctrine, thus virtually denying what he has said. Besides, true politeness never requires us to act contrary to our honest convictions of truth, or to disobey a precept of the Scripture. I like to see one gentleman courteous to another, when this courtesy does not interfere with his conscience. An upright, conscientious Christian course of conduct is the very essence of politeness, and I think you will find the Baptists possess as much of it as other people.”

“Yes, Sanford,” said the old lady, as Mr. Blackwell paused, “they begin now to accuse us of a want of common courtesy, of selfishness, of bigotry, and many harsh things, because we adhere to our own honest belief, and refuse to associate with them in teaching error. Ah! it hasn’t been many years since they not only refused to our

preachers the privilege of preaching, but confined them in prisons, and whipped them publicly for daring to obey God rather than their tyrannical laws. Fines, prisons, the whipping-post, and such like, were good enough for the poor Baptists *then*; but *now*, since the civil laws protect us from their clutches, and we have become respectable in the eyes of the world, they begin to want to unite with us; and because we refuse, from conscientious scruples, they raise a hue and cry about exclusiveness. I wonder who used to be exclusive when our ministers were shut up in their jails for daring to preach the Gospel of the Son of God. Ah! they were not suffered to go into *their own* pulpits then, much less invited into one of the Protestant pulpits. They have tried to crush us and failed, and now they would willingly hug us to death. I remember, when I was a child, hearing my parents (who were Episcopalians) talk about the sufferings of the Baptists in Virginia. I thought it was all right then, but I hope God has

forgiven me for the sin." Here she closed with a deep sigh, for with this reminiscence of her youthful days was associated the memory of certain petty trials and annoyances to which, in her maturer years, she was subjected for her change of faith.

"Sanford," resumed Mr. Blackwell, after a short pause, "I contend that it would not only be impolite, but glaringly inconsistent, for us to hold pulpit communion with the Pedobaptists. They will acknowledge it themselves if they will look at it in the true light. Some of their ministers do acknowledge it."

"How is that?"

"We differ entirely in some of our doctrines, in our practices, and in our ideas of Church-government, and the character of our Church-membership. It is impossible for us ever to unite in propagating the doctrines of the Gospel, when we can not agree as to what those doctrines are, and it is folly for us to pretend to it. It is inconsistent to invite a man to preach with us when we

can not invite him to the Lord's table. If he is without the inclosure, and can not partake at the Lord's table, surely he is not qualified to teach others the way into it, or to instruct those who are within concerning their duty. The Protestants do not unite among themselves, although some of them commune together, and then denounce each other's practices as heartily as they do ours. Now, which is the more consistent, pray, to refuse to unite at all, or to unite on some few occasions, and abuse each other on others?"

"Why, you had better not pretend to unite at all, when you know you can't."

"That is my notion too. Now, let me tell you what I have seen, Sanford. I have seen Presbyterians attend Methodist meeting, and denounce some of their doctrines, and laugh at their fussy way of doing things, and, at the close, go up and commune with them; and I have known the Methodists sigh and shrug their shoulders at the cold manner of the Presbyterians, and their un-

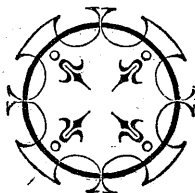


compromising Calvinistic doctrines, and yet commune with them. I know the Baptists are not entirely guiltless; they laugh and censure too, sometimes, more than they should, but they do not add to their fault the inconsistency of communing with those whom they condemn. So I contend they treat the Protestants better, in this respect, than their own brethren do; and I believe each denomination of them have more true respect for the Baptists than they have for each other."

"Do you know, father, who it was we heard say last week that the modern idea of a man with liberal principles was that of a man destitute of all fixed principle?"

"No, my son, I do not; but I am sure that Baptists will be obliged to give up all those principles which characterize them as Baptists before they can be accounted liberal Christians by the various Protestant sects. They will never be contented with anything less than a plain admission, on our part, that they are just as truly Scriptural

Churches, and their preachers just as truly Scriptural ministers as our own. And this is just equal to saying that we are both wrong, or that two things widely different are yet one and the same thing. While we retain our common sense, and are convinced that our doctrines and Church-order are those required in the word of God, we must be utterly destitute of principle to do either. Suppose we retire now. It is getting late, and we have the prospect of a cold, hard day to-morrow. Get the Bible, Sam, and let us have prayers. Wake up, my little pet, and sit on your stool by grandma a little while."



## CHAPTER XI

## THE INDECENCY OF BAPTISM.

“And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water.”—MATT. iii: 16

THE next day was, indeed, a cold, hard one, and for several days after so severe that the ice did not thaw. Mary and Sam were kept at home, for their grandmother could not trust them over the slippery street, and Mr. Martin accepted the invitation of his friends to supper, for several nights in succession, to avoid the dangerous walking after dark. The children, confined at home, were variously occupied during the day, for their grandmother never suffered them to be idle, but they looked forward with pleasure to the long evenings when their brother would read some interesting book, or their

father would converse with them, sometimes telling them a Bible story, sometimes tales of the countries they had read about, and which he had visited; for, in his younger days, he had been a great traveler. On Saturday Mr. Blackwell and William attended their regular Church-conference, and on Sabbath, notwithstanding the ground was very soft and slippery from the thaw, all the family, except Mrs. Patterson and Laura, attended church; for they never failed on one of their church-days, which, for the past year or two, came only once a month; the Baptists in Hampton not thinking themselves able to have it oftener. This morning, cold and disagreeable as it was, they were a little surprised to meet Mr. Martin and Mr. Reynolds both, for they were not regular attendants, even in pleasant weather. Their greeting was very pleasant, and William invited them to take a seat with him near the pulpit. They walked home with them, and at dinner the conversation turned very naturally upon the subject of the day's dis-

course, which had been the atonement of Christ; the young men asking Mr. Blackwell many questions, for they had not quite understood it, and, as they had never felt any interest in the subject before, it was all new to them. It was evident that something had disturbed William, for he had but very little to say. The conversation was kept up for about an hour after dinner, without interruption; then it began to change to other subjects, and finally to flag from lack of interest. As Mr. Blackwell was about refilling his pipe for another smoke, William spoke:

“Father, I heard a remark made to-day in the church-yard, after services, which, I confess, has made me a little angry. You know, we heard, some time ago, that Miss Jane Hartwell wanted to join the Baptist Church, but her friends violently opposed it, and were trying every means to persuade her out of the notion. Well, to-day, I heard one gentleman say to another, that all their efforts had failed, and that her father had

finally told her no decent lady would submit to be immersed, that it was an immodest act, and he should be exceedingly mortified if a daughter of his were to submit to such an indecent thing; and that she had yielded rather than mortify her father."

"Well, brother, are you angry because they won't let Miss Jane join the Baptist Church?" said Mary, laughing, while her eyes twinkled with the mischievous thought in her head; but her grandmother stopped any further expression of it by shaking her head at her, for Mary always looked at the old lady when she thought perhaps she was exceeding bounds.

"No, Mary; I am not angry about that," replied he, while a deep blush told that the thrust had taken effect; "but mother and grandmother, and several of our aunts have been baptized, and I know *they* are perfect ladies, and would be as clear of doing an improper thing as any one else can be; and when a man says no decent lady would be immersed, he stigmatizes them as indecent.

It disturbed me so that I hardly remember any of the sermon."

"Yes, indeed," said Mr. Reynolds, with an excited air; "it would not do for me to hear a man say such a thing; for my mother is a Baptist, and I would think it my duty to knock him down out of respect to her."

"O no, boys; come, that is not the way our Savior taught us to defend our doctrines," said Mr. Blackwell. "'Put up thy sword into the sheath,' he said to Peter, when, in misguided zeal, he attempted to defend his Master with the sword. A Baptist should never raise his hand to strike one for attacking his faith; if our doctrines can not be supported by the Bible, they are not worth fighting for. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but spiritual. But, my son, I thought you were never going to be disturbed again by anything that could be said against the Baptists."

"I hadn't thought of such a thing as indecency being charged upon them; I can't

be very cool when any act of my mother is called indecent or immodest."

"Ah! my son, that is nothing new, I assure you," said Mrs. Patterson. "Mr. Hartwell is not the first one that ever said it; I have heard it often. But I never think of getting angry; their saying so don't make it so. Why, my dear boy, when your grandfather and I were baptized my parents were so ashamed of us that no one ever dared mention the circumstance in their presence; they felt themselves disgraced, and my mother took to her bed from pure mortification. I was grieved for her because I knew her feelings were really hurt, but that didn't make me feel that *I* had done anything disgraceful."

"Mr. Blackwell," said Mr. Reynolds, "you say we should not defend our faith by fighting; I know it's rather a rough-and-tumble way for a Christian to act; but what would *you* say to a man who objected to immersion on account of indecency?"

"I should first ask him if he supposed



Christ was a genteel man? No one, not even a scoffer, is blasphemous enough to answer No to such a question; and the simple fact that the Savior was immersed ought to stop the sneering of others, especially of professed Christians, at this sacred rite; and it is enough, sir, to make it beautiful in our sight and dear to our hearts, in spite of the scoffs of opponents. The immaculate Son of God, who was all purity and loveliness, walked down into the Jordan in broad daylight, was buried beneath the stream, and came up out of it without blushing or shrinking; and what are *we* that we should blush to follow him? One of the objects of baptism was for our example, and it is presumable that he was as well acquainted with the rules of propriety as any poor mortal; or do you suppose that he would have left us an example which was not strictly genteel, even, much less indecent?"

"Let me tell you," said Sanford, "what I have heard about that: I heard a lady say once that there was no impropriety in

the act in the time of our Savior; but that the manners and customs of society had changed very much since then; so, what was perfectly proper in that early time would be exceedingly immodest in this advanced state of refinement. What do you think of *that*, Mr. Blackwell?"

"I think the person who uttered the sentiment was blasphemous, whether she intended to be so or not. Just think of it for a moment. It is either accusing God of instituting a rite which he intended should cease whenever society arrived at a certain stage of refinement, that is, more refined than the Savior was; or that he intended one mode of baptism for rude, uncultivated people, and another for the genteel sort, which is making God a respecter of persons; or it is saying, God is so short-sighted he could not look into futurity, and tell that he was introducing a rite which his children would one day blush to receive, and which would be very immodest in a certain stage of society. The world has indeed advanced very rapidly

in refinement when it has outstripped the omniscience of God. I fear those who are too genteel to follow the example of the Savior here, will be too genteel to enjoy the society of heaven. They will surely blush to find themselves in company with a large number of those who have unblushingly followed Christ into the water. Some of these genteel people ought to have been by when the Savior was going into the water and objected to it. But laying all opposition aside, there is nothing in a baptism, rightly conducted, at which the most refined lady, of the most delicate nerves, need to blush; and no one who has any regard for truth and justice need say so, unless he does it from a spirit of ridicule or envy. It is true, sometimes our brethren and sisters are tolerably awkward about it, but any one with the least perception of right can discern between an ordinance and the mistakes of those who administer it, or of the candidate and his assistants."

"Yes, honey, they can tell," said Mrs. Pat-

terson; "they just want to make fun; they know we are right; their consciences tell them so; but they must have something to say, and when they run short of argument they resort to ridicule. Ah! if they would only think of it, they are ridiculing the Savior, not us. They don't think of it in that light, I know. It does look immodest to them, for they have been raised to think so, and prejudice has a great deal to do with their judgment. When I was young, I was as good to laugh as anybody; but thank the Lord, he enlightened my mind to perceive my error, and gave me grace to forsake it. Baptism is one of our crosses, and sometimes the opposition of relatives and the scoffs of enemies make it very heavy, but God gives us grace to bear it."

"I do not know so well about their actually thinking it immodest," resumed Mr. Blackwell; "some years ago I attended the bathing-places at Cape May, and other points on the sea-coast. There were crowds of ladies there from what is called the high-

est rank of society. They did not seem to feel that there was the slightest indelicacy or impropriety in going into the water there. Some of them went barefooted, and seemed glad to have gentlemen very near them. Even those whom they had known but a few hours were sometimes taken as their guardians, to lead them into the waves and keep them from drowning. It is only when going into the water is in obedience to Christ that it is regarded as indelicate or ungenteel. At Cape May it is exceedingly genteel."

"Father," said Mary, "Lucy Hunter says that Christ was not immersed, but went down to the Jordan, and John poured water on him; for her father told her so."

"Well, my daughter, I have nothing to say to that. When a man can so close his eyes to the truth, it is not worth while to answer him. But my duty to you, my children, requires that I should say this is a willful perversion of Scripture. It requires considerable hardihood to deny the

immersion of the Savior. I have heard it, but never until late years. This is one of the effects of advanced civilization, I suppose, for such a thing as denying the Savior's immersion never occurred till men arrived at such a pitch of refinement that they can resort to most desperate measures to defend their practices. They find they are losing ground, and rather than yield, they will make assertions which have no foundation. You know it is an old proverb, 'A drowning man will catch at straws;' and this will very well express the desperate resort of one who, to uphold sprinkling, will deny the immersion of the Savior. That's worse than saying it is indecent; don't you think so, boys?"

"I believe it is," replied Mr. Reynolds. "I am glad William mentioned that subject this afternoon; for if I had heard a man say it was indecent I should have fought; but since we have talked it over, I believe I could hear it with complacency."

"Never get angry, my boy, when an

opinion of yours is assailed, but inquire if you are right, and search till you find out, and the consciousness of right is sufficient to bear us up under any abuse."

"The Savior, when he was reviled, reviled not again," said Mrs. Patterson; "and we should try to imitate his meekness in bearing injuries, as well as his boldness in proclaiming and defending the *truth*. We *must* follow him through duties and through trials, too. All the shame, and abuse, and scoffing we are made to endure for his sake, is nothing<sup>o</sup> to what he bore for us. If our enemies traduce us, remember they are the ones who suffer by it, not us, and instead of getting angry with them, we should, in imitation of our Savior, and in obedience to his command, pray for them."

"I will try to remember your counsel," replied Mr. Reynolds, rising to leave; "thank you for it; I know my mother would thank you if she were here. Sanford, I claim your promise to take tea with me this evening."

“Certainly ; I am willing to redeem my promise, that is, if Mrs. Patterson will excuse me,” turning to her.

“O, yes. When you make a promise, keep it. I confess, I do not much like for you to dine or take tea out on the Sabbath, but I know you are in good company, when with Mr. Reynolds, or at his boarding-house.”

“Then I take that as a good hint that I have been transgressing the rules by accepting the invitation to dine with you to-day.”

“O, no, Mr. Reynolds ; you know I did not mean any such thing,” said she, in a deprecating tone.

Laughing heartily at her discomfiture, the young men bade good-evening to the group.

“Good-evening, boys. Shall we meet you to-night at prayer-meeting?” said Mr. Blackwell, in a pleasant tone. “The walking will not be so bad after dark, for the ground will be frozen, and we generally have the Church comfortable ; or, perhaps,



our services will be so interesting you will not feel the cold. You can only try it."

"Thank you, we will," both replied, as they walked out.

True to their promise, they were at Church at an early hour. Before the commencement of services, Mr. Blackwell went back and invited them, with several others, to take seats near the pulpit, saying it was warmer there, and they would be glad to have their voices to assist in the singing. They readily complied, for Mr. Blackwell was universally respected, and the invitation from him was received as a mark of his especial good feeling toward them.

About the close of the services, several young men, not accustomed to attend, walked in and took their seats in the rear of the house. There were various opinions and surmises among the members as to the cause of their coming. Some supposed it was from pure curiosity; others, that they had become tired of the long evening, and walked in to see and hear something new, while one good

old sister *hoped* that they came from an honest desire to engage in religious worship, and not being used to attend, had mistaken the hour.

But it turned out in a few days. There was a rumor afloat that Sanford Martin was about to join the Baptist Church, and was trying to persuade Reynolds to go with him; and for that purpose had invited him to dinner that day, in order that Mr. Blackwell might remove all his doubts. They supposed it was all settled, as it was reported that the two had been seen walking very lovingly together to Church that night. And they had come to hear what the young men would say, and to see the Baptists rejoice over them. They had even speculated pretty largely upon how the young men would stand the water such cold weather. They were doomed, however, to disappointment, for there was not even an invitation given to any one to join.

## CHAPTER XII.

ARE BAPTISTS MORE THAN OTHERS JUSTLY LIABLE TO  
THE CHARGE OF DRUNKENNESS.

“Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.”—MATT. v : 11.

 few mornings after this, Mr. Blackwell was obliged to send William to some distance on an errand, and was very late himself getting to the shop. As he walked in, the journeymen were all at their appropriate work, but listening, some of them in great glee, to one who was relating the pranks of a man whom he had seen a few nights since. Just as Mr. Blackwell entered the shop, he said, evidently in reply to some question:

“O, no ; he was n’t exactly drunk ; that is, he did n’t fall down, or anything so ; he

was just what you might call good *Baptist* tight—real jolly.”

Here some one called his attention to Mr. Blackwell's presence. Blushing, and confused, he said :

“I beg your pardon, sir ; I did n't know you were about, or I would n't have told it.”

“No apology needed, Mr. Rexford. I would just as soon you would tell it before me as any one else ; but I want to hear something more about it. Who was it you saw drunk?”

“Excuse me, Mr. Blackwell ; I do n't wish to expose the poor fellow. You will report him to the Church, and I should be sorry to be the cause of his arraignment. Did n't any one see it but me, and I haven't told any one his name.”

“Tell me one thing, Mr. Rexford, if you please. What do you call *Baptist* tight?”

“Just tipsy enough to be lively.”

“Why do you call it Baptist tight. Do you think it is peculiar to Baptists?”

“No, sir ; not exactly peculiar to them ;

at least, they are not the only ones who take too much sometimes ; but the Baptists, I believe, Mr. Blackwell, generally love it, and *some* of them do get a little tight occasionally. You know that is granted to be a privilege of the Baptists. No one thinks anything of it."

"Ah! stop a moment, if you please ; if you had n't thought anything of it, you would not be repeating it. The simple fact that you are telling it, is proof that you know it is wrong. And how does it happen to be a privilege of the Baptists to get drunk occasionally, any more than other denominations ? Who granted the privilege ?"

"No one in particular. I believe it is just given by tacit consent of society, because they are oftener seen tipsy than any other denomination."

"I think you are a little mistaken, Rexford. I do not wish to accuse any other denomination, or screen the faults of my own ; but I think the reason the Baptists are accused of it oftener, is because it is

more noticed in them than in any others. We are more narrowly watched, and the slightest deviation from right in a Baptist is noticed and paraded before the world. It shows what a high standard of religion the world and Protestants have set for the Baptists. A fault which is scarcely noticed in others, is magnified into an enormous sin in us. This does no harm, however, but is rather a benefit, for it makes us more watchful, perhaps, than we should otherwise be."

"But, Mr. Blackwell, don't you allow your members to get a little gentlemanly tight sometimes?"

"Certainly not, sir. We allow nothing the Testament does not; and I am sure the drunkard is granted no exclusive privileges in that; neither does it give any allowance to the sin of drunkenness. Why, you have just refused to tell me whom you saw drunk, for fear I would arraign him. You certainly don't think we are very lax in treating this vice."

“Yes, sir. I knew *you* would report him, but *all* of your brethren will not; for I have, in the course of my life, seen several of them stagger.”

“Well! I never saw it but once; and then the brother reported his own case and was tried. This is one reason, perhaps, why you have formed an idea that we grant this as an especial privilege to our brethren. We can not arraign a man for a fault, unless we have some evidence that he is guilty. Now, if he knows he is transgressing the rules of the Gospel, he will be very apt to avoid the company of his brethren, whom he knows will report his case; and then, if he has not honesty or nerve enough to report his own case, we have no hold on him. Sometimes it happens that a good brother is overtaken by this fault, which, perhaps, was his besetting sin before he professed religion; and, in that case, we would deal very leniently with him, of course; and I once knew an old brother, who was consistent in every other respect, and the Church bore very

patiently with him, on account of his large and interesting family, many of whom were members of the Church. But I have no doubt, many a trial for offenses takes place in our Churches, of which the world knows nothing; for they do not often attend our conference meetings. They are very apt to see the fault, but they know nothing about its being rectified. No, sir; you are mistaken in supposing we grant indulgence to any particular sin. We do not profess to have authority to do so; I believe none but the Catholics claim the right of granting indulgences."

"But, Mr. Blackwell, in the neighborhood where I was raised, there was one of the deacons who was frequently seen to reel under the influence of liquor; he kept it constantly in the house, and drank habitually."

"Was he never tried for the fault?"

"Yes, sir; I believe he was once or twice; but he always professed penitence, and begged to be forgiven."



“What else could they do, under the circumstances, but excuse him? If we were to exclude a man, in spite of his repentance and entreaties to be forgiven, you would accuse us of unnecessary harshness, and we would be acting contrary to the spirit of love and charity inculcated by Christ, our great Lawgiver. He taught us to forgive a penitent brother, not only seven times, but seventy times seven. True, when a man commits the same sin repeatedly, it argues that something is wrong within; but, if he professes to repent each time, we can not judge of his heart, and say he has not. If we reject him, we might possibly reject one whom the Savior had received; we must be very cautious in this matter.”

“Yes, but I know a worse case than that; I hope you will excuse me, Mr. Blackwell, for telling it,” said one of the other workmen.

“Yes, sir; say on.”

“There is a member of the Church in B—— who gets drunk so often that it is

said, by the citizens, that he can not be re-elected; when his term shall have expired; for he is now a public officer. I am pretty certain his brethren know it, some of them at least, for it is public talk."

"Do the Church take no notice of it!"

"No, sir, not that I have ever heard; and then there is Parson Dearmon, who, it is said, takes a little too much sometimes; though I can't exactly vouch for that; I have seen him take a dram occasionally, but I never saw him with too much."

"Yes, my dear sir, a dram was too much for a Christian, unless he was sick, and was certain it was a remedy for his particular case. And the Churches to which such members belonged were very remiss in their duty if they took no notice of it. And because a few individual Churches tolerated some of their members in error, I hope you will not take it for granted we are all wrong in principle. We profess to take the Bible for our sole guide in faith and practice; and if you will examine our

doctrines and form of Church government, you will find they correspond with those in the Gospel. Some individual Churches may be very lax in discipline; and some individual members may err in conduct, or be unsound in some one article of faith; for we are only frail human creatures, liable to mistakes in judgment, or practice, in common with all mankind; but, as a general thing, sir, I think, if you will lay aside all prejudice, you will acknowledge that we look upon a departure from the right with as little allowance as any other denomination. We commit mistakes sometimes, and very egregious ones, when we tolerate vice in any form; but it is done either through ignorance or charity, not because it is an avowed principle among us. There are exceptions to all rules, and these drunken Baptists are, I assure you, exceptions to our rules of faith. But you can judge of that yourself; is it most common to see them drunk or sober?"

"O, as to that, the majority of Baptists

I ever knew are very upright, moral people, and the most of the Churches rather strict, I think, upon an offending member."

"Yes; but let one step aside and how quick the world notices it, especially if his brethren show him any favor. Ever since the day the scribes and Pharisees murmured at our Master for eating with publicans and sinners, we have been watched and censured, whether in fault or not. They take no notice of the thousands of our brethren and sisters who have lived truly exemplary lives, whose characters are above suspicion and above reproach; but they turn aside, and pick up and parade the few feeble ones who stumble by the way. I know of but one comparison to suit the case: No one takes any particular notice of the many beautiful stars that shine above us of a clear night, so long as they keep steadily in their course; but let one shoot, and it is seen and commented upon by numbers. But do not understand me as justifying a Baptist who gets drunk or commits any other offense. I sin-

cerely grieve for it, and wish the leaven of unrighteousness was purged from all our Churches ; but the members are only frail human beings, and if tares do come up occasionally among the wheat, what more can we do than take the Master's advice, let all stand till the harvest, *then he* will separate them? As executors of the laws of Christ's kingdom, it is our duty to be strict in discipline, but the will of our Lawgiver requires that justice shall be tempered with mercy ; and in such cases as I have mentioned, while justice demands the expulsion of the offending member, mercy pleads that we spare him a little longer. But in those flagrant cases that have been mentioned, the Churches were in manifest error if they took no notice of them."

"Pshaw! no use in fussing about it," said a visitor, leaning back and propping his feet against the stove ; "but I have heard several good men say they would not join the Baptist Church because so many drunkards belong to it."

“We are not fussing, Mr. Staunton. I believe we are all in good-humor; but as to some persons objecting to us, it is only what we expect. It was objected to the Savior while on earth that he received sinners, (Luke xv: 2;) and that he suffered his disciples to eat with unwashed hands. Those who object to join a Church because some of the members are unworthy, I judge are not prepared to join at all; or they are very anxious to find an excuse for neglecting their duty. They are not answerable for the faults of others, and to refuse to discharge their duty for fear of being thrown into company with others who are at fault, is no excuse. There was a Judas among the immediate followers of Christ, and I fear there always will be some in the Churches. It is folly to object to any society because some of the members are unworthy. Nothing of earth is perfect, and though the Church is an institution of Christ, yet the materials of which it is composed are earthly and liable to error. They will never be free

from it till they become angels in heaven. But I suppose, Mr. Staunton, you will acknowledge that it is the duty of one who believes God has pardoned his sins to come out from the world, attach himself to a Church, and give his life to the service of his Creator."

"Yes, sir. I always doubt a man's religion when he lives just like one of us people of the world."

"Then if a professor of religion lives all his life in the world, refusing to take upon himself the name and duties of a disciple, for the simple reason that some of the professed believers are unworthy, do you suppose it would form a legal excuse at the bar of God?"

"No, sir; a man ought to discharge his duty as far as he knows, no matter what others do."

Here the conversation was abruptly closed by the entrance of some one who called to see Mr. Blackwell on business. The visitor walked out, and it was not renewed any more

that day; but as they gathered about the fire at night, Mr. Blackwell repeated it to his children, regretting very much that any one had occasion to cast such a reproach upon a Baptist Church. "And," added he, "we are very narrowly watched, not only by the world, but by the Protestants, and all our faults noticed. But it is all right; this watchfulness of our opponents makes us more watchful ourselves. It may be a means which Providence has ordered to keep his institution pure. Our carelessness might suffer the tares to grow up too thick among us did not the vigilance of our opponents call our attention to them."

"There is one thing," said Mr. Martin, "I want to mention to you, and should have forgotten it had you not spoken of the Protestants; the Baptists do not claim to be Protestants, do they?"

"Of course not."

"For that reason I heard a gentleman once say that the Baptist Churches were



not Gospel Churches, and he quoted this passage of Scripture in proof of it: ‘Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.’—Rev. xviii: 4. Now, his notion was, that as God commanded his people to come out of her, (the Romish Church,) and the Baptists deny ever coming out of her, therefore they are not Churches at all.”

“Indeed, that is strange reasoning! He commanded his people to come out of Rome, to separate themselves from her abominations, and to come out on the Lord’s side; and that command is still in force. Frequently one who has been raised in the bosom of the Romish Church is converted by the grace of God, and such a one is commanded to leave her. Yes, God commands his people to come out of Rome, but can you show a verse in the Bible which ever intimated that *only those who do* come out are his people? If this were so, where would you place the apostles and early Christians?

*They* certainly did not come out of Rome ; but could any one dare to say *they* were not God's people ?”

“ But I think, Mr. Blackwell, this gentleman had reference to the Church as an institution.”

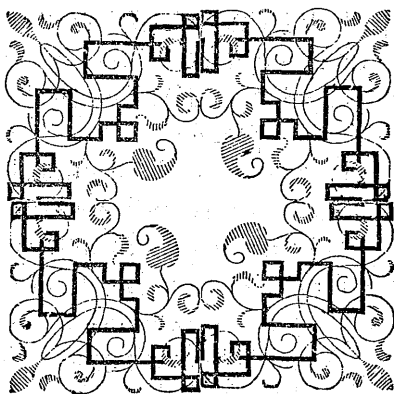
“ What of that ? It makes the case no better. The first Churches certainly did not come out of Rome. You may read the Testament carefully ; and you will find no Church at all resembling the Roman Catholic ; that we have already seen. The Church at Rome apostatized and became what the Roman Catholic is now ; but this hierarchy, with all its abominations, was certainly not founded by Christ and his apostles. That would be making Christ the founder of an organization so corrupt that mortals even were obliged to reject it. One who thinks the Romish Church the oldest in the world, as some assert, must believe it is the one that originated with Christ ; and this is equivalent to making God the author of sin ; or it is saying he is not so wise or so

pure-minded as his followers, seeing they have been obliged to protest against the abominations of an institution which, according to their belief, he founded. I would not like to be of the number of those who make such assertions. If I believed the Roman hierarchy to be the oldest Church in the world, I should certainly think it my duty to belong to it."

"Yes, sir; but they say she was a true Church at first; but she apostatized from the faith, and they protested against her *abominations*, not her organization."

"When she apostatized she ceased to be a true Church; therefore we must look for something which was in existence *before* her degeneracy for a true Church, instead of that which came *after* or *out of* her corruption; and looking at this early period we find the Gospel Churches, which, upon comparing with the Baptists, we have proved to be the same. We could not come out of her, for we were before her. I presume it was the Church at Rome, one of those

founded by the apostles, which apostatized and became what the Roman Catholics are now; but then she ceased to be a Church, and we have never recognized her or her abominations.”



## CHAPTER XIII.

## BAPTIST STINGINESS.

“And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offense toward God and toward men.”

—ACTS xxiv : 16.



RS. PATTERSON had listened to this conversation without saying a word, but as Mr. Blackwell paused she remarked :

“That is such an absurd notion to say we are not true Churches, because we did not come out of Rome, that I don't think it is worth a refutation ; but I have one or two objections to the Baptists myself. I believe they are the true Gospel Churches, but they do come very far short of their duty in some respects ; at least *some* of them do. I think it will puzzle you to find an apology for them, George.”

“What is it, mother? I will try.”

“I am now an old woman, and have been a Baptist a great many years, but I never knew more than one or two Churches that ever paid their pastor more than half as much as his services were worth, or as they were able to pay. Now, this is opposed to the spirit of the Gospel; for religion inculcates liberality of feeling and of purse. Christ was ministered unto by his disciples, and, when he sent them out to preach, he told them to take nothing for their journey, for he said the ‘laborer was worthy of his hire,’ evidently meaning that their services were worth a support. Now, we *don’t* do our duty in this respect, George; that we don’t.”

“Father,” said William, “that is rather a serious charge against us. Can it be possible that the true Churches of Christ are so disobedient to his known will; or is it possible we are not the Gospel Churches after all? It seems that we do not agree very well with the New Testament Churches in this respect.”

“We are, indeed, very remiss in this duty,” replied his father, “but this charge, like that of drunkenness, is not of universal application. It does not amount to a creed or general principle among us. The majority of our brethren and sisters will agree that ministers should be supported, though they seem to have very imperfect notions as to what it takes to constitute that support. If we take the trouble to inquire particularly into this matter, we will find some members in each Church who pay their pastor liberally in proportion to their means; though, in many cases, these liberal members constitute the minority, which makes the burden very heavy on them, or the pastor must suffer; frequently it is both. This is a stigma upon our Churches, and I can account for it only in this way: it arises either from their imperfect knowledge of their duty, or from their carelessness in performing that duty. It is willful ignorance in them, I know, because the Testament is very plain on this subject;

but we must make some allowances for the imperfections of human nature. There are many, who, though they admit the laborer is worthy of his hire, set a very low estimate upon that hire; and others, who intend and even promise to pay liberally, yet because they are not forced to be prompt, defer it from time to time, thinking, perhaps, the pastor is in no haste, because he does not dun him, till, finally, it is forgotten altogether. The pastor and his family suffer, but, as they suffer in silence, the delinquent never knows it, or if it should accidentally come to his knowledge, he thinks his little defalcation could not, surely, produce so much want; so he becomes easy, except, perhaps, a little twinge of the conscience now and then, but not severe enough to prevent him from repeating the offense. In fact, one delinquency, if that were all, would not affect much; but, unfortunately, there may be a majority of the members equally at fault, each one thinking his little dues can not make much difference. I am



sorry the Baptists are so much at fault about this," said he sadly, and he lit his pipe, and smoked mechanically, seemingly absorbed in meditation.

Now, my young readers, let me have a few words with you alone. You are members of Baptist families; perhaps you belong to Baptist Sabbath-schools; or, maybe, *some* of you belong to Baptist Churches. While you are minors, it is in your power to do but little for your pastor, as you have but little funds of your own; but do all you can. You can cheer him in his labors, by being regular and punctual in your attendance at Church, at conference-meetings, at prayer-meetings, and at Sabbath school; and by being orderly in your deportment while there. If you live near him, you can do him many little favors, especially during sickness of himself or family; your kind attentions may soothe him in many a weary hour of pain. But when you become of age, and have a purse of your own, it will be your duty to render him material aid.

Search the Scriptures, and ascertain your whole duty in this respect, and discharge it faithfully, leaving the consequences to God. Do not withhold that which is his due, from any fear of future want yourself; such a consideration would not deter you from paying any other debt, and it is as great a sin to defraud your minister as any one else. Ascertain whether he is able to meet all reasonable liabilities; and if he is not, you can render him efficient service by being liberal and prompt yourself, and by urging others to the same. If your pastor's heart is bowed down under the constant, crushing care of inability to supply the necessary wants of his family, and his mind distracted with plans to obtain that which they really need, he can not give as much time and attention as he should to the preparation of his sermons. Then the congregation, and often his Church, begin to complain of his preaching, which adds another trouble to his already burdened spirit. If your pastor happens to preach a dry,

uninteresting sermon, instead of complaining of it to others, try to excuse him ; think of his circumstances and all his surroundings, and see if the cause does not lie there ; withal, remember he is but mortal, and uninspired, and, like all other mortals, liable to fault. Do not expect too much of him. Meet him at all times kindly and pleasantly. A cheerful greeting, a kind attention to his comfort, a cordial welcome to your fireside, an unfeigned willingness to promote his happiness, at all times and under all circumstances, will take many a weary load from his heart. Your pastor has many a secret care unknown to you ; beware of adding anything to their weight. Again, ministers are often the subjects of slanderous reports. Never give credence to one, unless it is substantiated by undoubted evidence. Do not be eager to say to the world, or to your brethren even, that your pastor is in fault ; but consider it your duty to shield him, as far as possible, from the malice of others ; to defend him, when attacked, till

he is proved, beyond doubt, to be unworthy. Pastors and people have reciprocal duties, and endeavor to discharge yours faithfully.

Here Mr. Blackwell seemed to arouse from his reverie, for he laid aside his exhausted pipe, and said:

“What other objection to the Baptists have you, mother? I think you spoke of more than one.”

“Well, my son, you know, when Christ was on earth, he approved of the conduct of those parents who brought their children unto him, to bless them; and because his disciples rebuked the parents, he was displeased with them and said: ‘Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not,’ (Mark x: 14;) and he took them up in his arms and blessed them. Now, George, do n’t you think it is obligatory upon us, as Christians, to bring our children to the Savior, as those parents did? and do n’t you know the Baptists have always been very negligent in this respect?”

“Yes,” remarked Mary; “that is the

very chapter Mr. Todd read when he baptized Mrs. Munson's children; and he said it had always been the practice of his Church to bring their children to the Lord in baptism; but the Baptists do n't do *that*, I know."

"Neither did Christ, my daughter, baptize those that were brought unto him. He said: 'Suffer the little children to come unto me;' and when they were brought he took them in his arms and *blessed*, but did not baptize them; you remember we examined this once before. As your grandmother remarked, it is our duty to bring our children to the Lord; but it should be done in the manner prescribed by the Gospel, not by the decree of the Church. We should bring them by our prayers; ask the Savior to bless them and make them his own, to shelter them in his protecting arms, and gently feed them as a shepherd does his lambs, through the snares and temptations peculiar to *youth*. We should also bring them by religious instruction; we should be careful to have them read the

word of God; and try to make it interesting to them by reading with them and explaining every difficult text to suit their comprehension, and according to our conscientious belief of it, never passing over carelessly any doctrine which we believe the Savior taught. We should furnish them with religious literature; that is, books and papers teaching them their duty to God and their fellow-creatures, in a plain, simple manner, such as they can understand. We should also bring them, by taking them with us to church and Sabbath-school, where they can be instructed in the simple truths of the Gospel. This is the way to bring them, for this accords with the Gospel; not by sprinkling or pouring water on them, for we have no authority for that."

"Ah, yes, George; but the Lord knows the Baptists are very deficient in this duty," said the old lady, as she sat with her head leaning on her hand, and looking into the fire with a serious, thoughtful expression, for she remembered this neglect in training her

own children. "I know when my children were small I sent them to Sabbath-school, but they lacked a great deal of getting the right instruction there. They were not taught the whole Gospel, for they used *Union* books, and they didn't know anything more about a Gospel baptism or a *Gospel Church* even, when they were nearly grown, than they did when they commenced. These things had to be smoothed over to gratify our opponents; and here are *your* children going on in the *same way*, George."

"I regret very much, mother, that they have hitherto been obliged to attend such schools, in default of any better, but I have tried to counteract their influence by instructing them at home to some extent, though I acknowledge I have come far short of my duty. And you know, mother, I never fail to commend them to the protection and guidance of God, in prayer, night and morning."

"Ah yes! my son, I did that too, but that is only part of our duty. What good

does it do to teach a child one doctrine at home, and send him to a school where we know he will be taught something exactly contrary to it, and place books in his hand which will counteract all our teaching? God does not require us to be faithful only in a *few* things, but in *all*, to teach only a *part* of his Gospel, but the *whole*. We might keep silent upon these controverted points if there was no one dependent upon us for instruction, but our children are immortal souls whom God has committed to our especial care, and I fear some of us will have an awful reckoning one day, when we come to give an account of the manner in which we have discharged this trust. Not only are parents guilty in this respect, but all those who prepare books of instruction for the young upon the plan of suppressing all contested points, or of teaching any doctrine for which they have no better authority than the custom of the Church. And herein I blame the Baptists; we have had our children taught in books prepared by those who,



we *know*, do not hold the truth as it is in Jesus."

"We have heretofore, done so," said Mr. Blackwell, "from a mistaken idea of kindness or courtesy in our people; they loved their neighbors or friends who belonged to other denominations, and disliked to appear harsh toward them. They were willing to compromise some things for the sake of harmony. They did not consider that they were unfaithful to God when they consented to have his word taught in a mutilated or distorted form to their offspring. It was a weak point in them, but we must not judge them too harshly, for not many years ago our people did not have the privilege of teaching the pure word to grown men and women even, without encountering the punishment of the civil law; so, when our oppressors came over and offered to unite with them in teaching the children, only on the condition that a few unimportant doctrines (as they called them) should be kept out of sight, our fathers readily accepted it, no

doubt thinking a GREAT PEACE had been gained. They erred from pure motives, and their error has been a great stumbling-block in all our Churches. Thank the Lord our eyes are beginning to be opened, and we have now many books and papers published by those who do not shun to declare the whole counsel of God; and in many places we have Sabbath-schools where the Bible is taught without curtailing or glossing over; so I hope they will become so general in a few years, mother, that there will be no foundation for your objection."

"I hope so, too, George; and Lord send my old eyes may yet see the day when my grandchildren shall have the opportunity of learning the perfect law of the Lord in the Sabbath-school and at church, as well as by the fireside. It was denied my poor children, but God has graciously answered my prayers, and brought them all into the fold of Christ, though some of them are yet weak in the true faith, afraid to speak or act out their conscientious belief, for fear

of offending others, owing, I suppose, to their early training. I feel that I have been very negligent, and to compensate in some degree for this neglect, I intend to contribute largely of my slender purse toward this Southern Baptist Sabbath-School Union, which is furnishing books, and those too of the right kind, judging from the two you got about a month ago for the children. You know, George, I always lay by the money I make by selling vegetables now and then for benevolent purposes. I have put by just half of *that* this year to give to the Southern Baptist Sabbath-School Union, and intend to send it by the first agent that comes along, praying that it may prove a blessing in the hands of God."

"You need not wait for the agent unless you choose, mother; I can send it directly to the publishers for you."

"I wish you would," she said, and immediately arose, went to her bureau, and taking eight dollars from a purse, handed it to him, with a request that he would send it

as soon as possible ; “ and tell them I intend to send them half I make every year till they get able to publish books and papers so cheap that all, even the poorest, can afford to have them.”

“ Well,” said Mr. Blackwell, poising the money in his hand, “ I would like to try how much I can make up ; it is as easy to send a large amount as a small one. Do not some of the rest of you wish to contribute to this object ? Haven’t you some change, my children, that you would be willing to spare to aid in publishing good books ?”

There was an immediate rummaging in the corners of trunks and drawers, where the children deposited their little change for safe keeping, and a whispered consultation between Sam and Barton at one side. They evidently had a purse in common, and were consulting how much to give. Barton poured it all into his hand, and divided it into two piles ; then another whispering, followed by a nod of Sam’s head. Finally Barton stepped up and put it all into his

father's hand, saying it was too small to divide, and they had concluded to give it all—seventy-five cents from him and fifty cents from Sam.

“Very well; that's quite generous, to give you all have. I know you made yours, Barton, by doing extra jobs for the workmen on Saturdays; but how came you by so much, Sam?”

Sam gave Mr. Martin a shy look, betraying as plainly as if he had spoken how he had obtained his, and also his fear that Mr. Martin might not be so well pleased with his appropriation of it.

“You are perfectly right to dispose of it as you please, Sam,” said Mr. Martin. “To be sure I thought of Christmas presents when I gave it, but I think you have put it to a better use.”

Mary produced fifty cents which Mr. Reynolds had given her for a pair of socks she knit. William and Mr. Martin each added something to the fund.

“I am truly glad to see you so liberal,

my children ; but remember this is not the only time ; instead of wasting your little money in foolish trifles, keep it and give it to some benevolent or religious purpose. Sabbath-schools, missionaries, ministers, the poor, etc., all have claims on us, and the money given to these purposes is just so much loaned to the Lord ; it is much better than if spent in candy, toys, etc. ; it will do more good, and will give more satisfaction. Here are fifteen dollars ; I will add five dollars, which will make twenty dollars. I will inclose it in a letter to the publishers, with the name of each contributor. But, my little pet," said he to the child on his knee, "what will you do?"

"What it is, papa? What are you going to do with this money?"

"I am going to send it to Nashville, to the men who publish books and papers for the children."

"Won't you buy me one pretty book, papa? Grandma is showing me how to read."

“And so you will contribute by reading. That’s a good thought of yours, my pet. The more purchasers they have the more money they will take in ; and, if we can do nothing more, we can buy books for the children. Yes, I will add another five dollars to this sum, and buy all of you some books ; among the rest, I will get some question-books, and teach my children at home, and let them stop going to this Union Sabbath-school.”

“Now you are talking about right, George. I am glad you have come to it at last, though you have been very slow about it.” And the old lady’s needles rattled as she knit faster and faster from excitement.

“I should have done so long since, mother, but held on in the hopes of getting my brethren to unite in forming a Baptist Sabbath-school. I have tried to persuade them several times, but without any effect. Some of them object by saying there are not enough children in the Baptist families to form a school ; and others oppose it for

fear of giving offense to others. So I will get the books and teach my own at home, hoping the brethren will soon see their error, and agree to have theirs taught the whole truth. I have now given you the best apology I can make for these faults of the Baptists, and hope the day will yet come when there will be no cause to accuse us of either. In many places they are getting the right instruction now, and it will soon be general, by the blessing of God. No danger of a failure in this thing; the movement is of God, is according to his will, and will have his blessing."

"Grandmother," said Mary suddenly, as if she had just awaked from sleep, "what made you say your *poor* children just now, when you were talking about them; what made you call them poor? I didn't know my uncles and aunts were very poor people."

"They are not poor in things of this world, my child; but the greatest of all poverty is to be denied the privilege of Gospel instruction. My children were taught a *part* of it,



it is true, but not the whole. I meant they were poor in the knowledge of the Bible, for some of its most important truths were suppressed in the schools they attended, and wrong impressions made upon their minds, from which some of them have never fully recovered. There is a prospect that my grandchildren will fare better, and I rejoice to see it."

"Well, we **have** had a pretty long talk to-night—suppose we have prayer;" and turning to the stand, Mr. Blackwell took up the Bible, read a chapter, sang and prayed. In his prayer he did not forget to ask a blessing upon the money that had been contributed that night, upon the donors, and the cause for which it had been contributed."

So William nor Mr. Martin never heard any more objections to the Baptists, particularly; there were no more conversations on that subject; but they frequently discussed controverted points and difficult texts of Scripture; occasionally, a sermon not well understood by the younger portion was

made a subject of conversation. Mrs. Patterson lived to bless the day when a Baptist Sabbath-school was established in Hampton according to her own notions. William was gratified, (as Mary averred,) by seeing Miss Jane Hartwell baptized with her father's consent, for it was the first time she ever refused to yield to his will, and was so respectful yet firm in her opinions, that immersion alone was baptism, he finally told her to do whatever she believed was right. It was a pretty day in the spring, but she was not baptized alone, for both Martin and Reynolds joined at the same time; so the surmises of the young men really came to pass; though none of them were there to witness the rejoicing, they crowded to the baptism. Mr. Blackwell treated his mother and younger children to a ride on the occasion, to the creek, about a mile from town. Though the old lady had been complaining for several previous days, she returned from the creek in a happy frame of mind, declaring she felt as well as ever.

Now, my young readers, you will in the course of your life hear many hard things said of the Baptists, but take nothing for granted. Search the Bible to see if these things are so; examine our doctrines by that standard alone and not by systems of men. Never return railing for railing, or persecution for persecution, but, like our Savior, forgive your enemies, and pray for them, even though they persecute you unto death. Be sure you are right; that your doctrines and practices are supported by the Scriptures; then be **FIRM**.



